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Adventure

GORDON YOUNG · M. WHEELER-NICHOLSON · CHARLES GILSON

T. S. STRIBLING · HENRY VINCENT · ROBERT CARSE · *and others*

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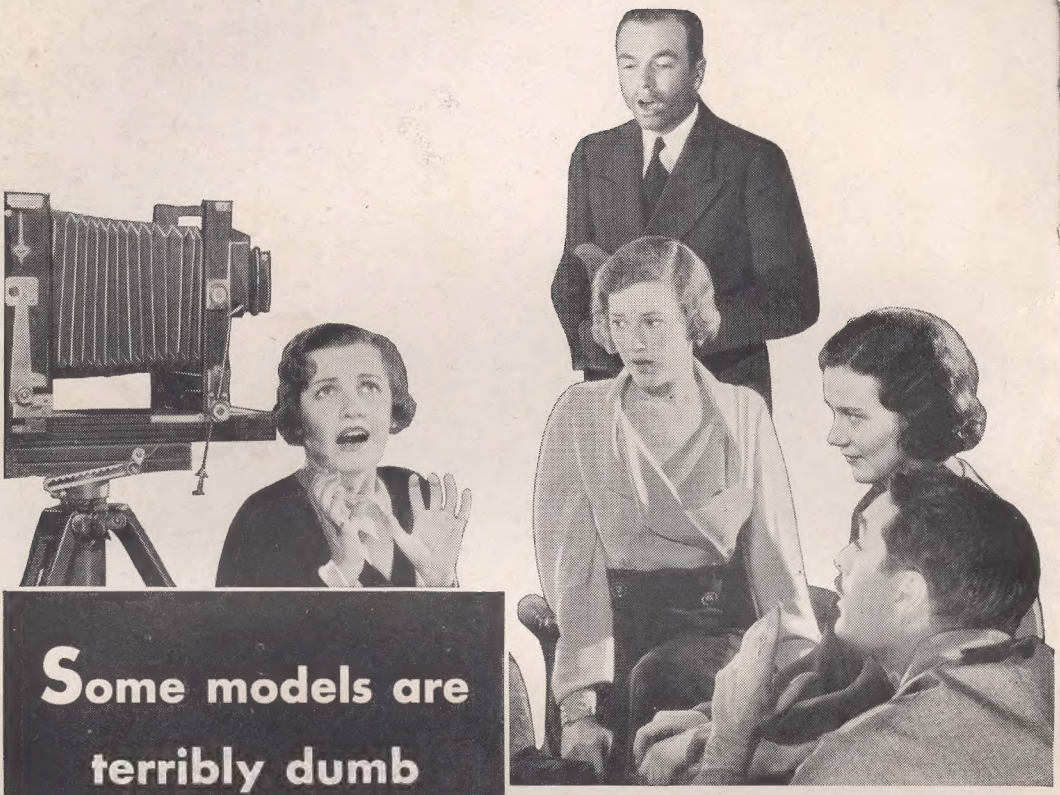

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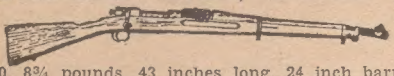

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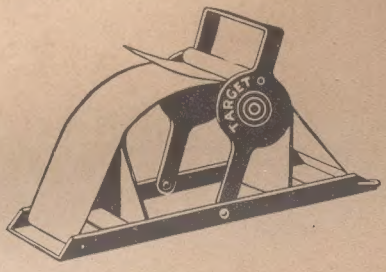

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CONTENTS

1932
VOL. LXXXII No. 4

for May 1st

A. A. Proctor
EDITOR

Fortune . . . . . ROBERT CARSE 2
A Story of Central America

Bullets . . . . . T. S. STRIBLING 20
A Story of the South

The Friendship Oath . . . . T. SAMSON MILLER 30
A Story of Black Africa

Tropical Lumberjack . . . . CHARLES A. FREEMAN 41

The Dead Ship . . . . . PIERRE MILLE 42
The Story of a Ghost of the Seas

The Devil's Passport . . . . GORDON YOUNG 48
A Novel of Don Everhard and the Paris Underworld. Six Parts—Part II

The Road Without Turning . . MALCOLM WHEELER-NICHOLSON 69
A Story of the World War

Fire Walkers Of Fiji . . . . CHARLES PEDEN 84
Further Adventures of a Newsreel Man

In The Cart . . . . . CHARLES GILSON 90
A Story of Singapore

They Got Their Man . . . . FRANK J. SCHINDLER 98

Sennett's Haul . . . . . HENRY VINCENT 100
A Complete Novel of the Corsairs of the Spanish Main

The Camp-Fire 183 Ask Adventure 187 Trail Ahead 192

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FORTUNE

By

ROBERT CARSE

IT WAS raining now. In gray, quickly gusting sheets the storm came across the dark river. It obscured the city behind him, the Statue of Liberty and the Jersey side; but where he stood in an after corner of the fast moving launch's cockpit, Miller could just see the red, green and yellow blobs of light above the dock on Governors Island.

Then, quickly, he turned, staring downriver and into the dim depths of the Narrows. There were no ships in the stream now. But far over on the Staten Island side he could hear the sharp and high roar of a very fast motor. Across the cockpit from Miller the man who stood at the launch's controls suddenly grew tense, and his hands jerked at the wheel and the motor controls.

The sound of their own motor died away. They drifted slowly through the darkness, without light or sound—only the small splash of waves against the side. Must be a Coast Guard cutter over there, thought Miller. That realization held a new elation, an odd humor for him; he grinned and looked off into the rain once more, seeking to see the other vessel. It was impossible to do so. But he could hear her motor, and it was farther away; she was going steadily on upstream. Underfoot, he could feel the sudden, strong shock as the motor was started again, heading now for the open sea.

He turned, attempting to get another look at the lights on Governors Island. The rain and the darkness were between. But he faced toward it anyhow.

"Too bad," he thought, "that I haven't got any way of letting them guys over there know I'm here, an' what me an' these other dukes here are going to do . . ."

In the side pocket of his khaki raincoat his fingers pleasantly met the big automatic Señor Raos had given him before they left the flat in Brooklyn. The feel of the gun, the smack of the open sea breeze, the knowledge of what he was about, all combined sharply together now to give him a strange new exhilaration.

"Sergeant Jake Miller," he whispered silently to himself, "formerly Regular U. S. Army. Now captain, Machine Gun Service, Army of Independence. An' to put all that quick—soldier of fortune."

The phrase, soldier of fortune, which he had read so many times, and had even used himself on occasion in the outfit, in barracks room discussions or over a seidel of beer in a joint outside the gates of some post, pleased him very much, more than the sound and knowledge of his new title and rank.

"You're lucky, you big stiff," he told himself. "You don't even yet know how much. Fourteen hours ago you was a platoon sergeant; now you're a captain —at two hundred gold a month."

He looked forward through the darkness and the rain. The big, clean lined launch was beginning to buck and jump. They were through the Narrows now. Coney Island must be off to port somewhere, and Sandy Hook on the other hand. In an hour or so, out beyond Ambrose and toward the Jersey headlands, they would pick up their steamer. He and the rest of these guys in the cabin who were his new mates would be busy then. This would be his last chance to think things out for some time to come.

He settled himself, with his hands out on each side to steady him, against the coaming rim of the cockpit and slowly reviewed what he now complacently looked upon as his luck. Strangely enough, he thought, the girl had started it all. If it hadn't been for her, he wouldn't have met Señor Raos and those other guys, and he wouldn't be here now.

For it had been the noise he had

made pounding on the door of the girl's flat which had brought old Raos out of his place across the hall. That had made Miller pretty sore at first, to be caught cursing and pounding at the door, because almost all the people in the house were Spanish, like the girl, and knew that he had been keeping company with her.

But Raos hadn't said anything about the noise. The old guy had just stood in his own door and bowed to him in a funny, slow way like they did in the movies, and asked him if he were looking for the señorita. He had hardly heard the other's questions at first, just figuring out that the girl had beat it on him, with all the clothes, the presents and the ring he had given her. And there was no doubt about it now that she had played him for a sucker, coaxed him to draw out a lot of his back pay, even to get his discharge, and the marriage license over at City Hall.

Those things had been all mixed up in his head, and he hadn't answered old Raos; just picked up his barracks bag and suitcase and started down the hall toward the stairs. But then Raos had followed him along the hall, taken him by the arm and talked to him. Even then, angry as he was, he couldn't help liking Raos. He didn't much like the white Santa Claus beard, the high collar and the tail coat, but spigs were funny people; the girl was proof of that.

Standing right there in the hall, Raos told him how the girl had left during the afternoon "with another gentleman". Then the old guy had introduced himself: "Juan Felipe de Loseras Raos". He had called him, right from the beginning, Sergeant Miller, and had smiled when Miller jumped. The girl, he had explained, had been talkative at times with Señora Raos and had told her about "her soldier".

But, Raos went on, still standing in the chilly, gaslit hall, he had not stopped the sergeant to talk about the girl. It was about another matter entirely, one which quite probably would be of very great interest to the sergeant if he would follow him into the flat, where they could talk in "true privacy".

MILLER had not answered for a time. During the past few minutes his emotions had been those of elation, anger, doubt, and then a dull despair. Anger had predominated through the latter part, for while he had rapped on the silent door of what had been the girl's flat, he could recall all his promises and farewells to the men in the outfit.

He had told them in the company and the regiment, ever since the time he had met the girl, that he was through with the outfit. To hell with it. No good guy belonged in it during peace time, anyhow. No guy who could help himself. And he was going to help himself. He was going to get out, at the end of this hitch. He and his girl were going to get married the day after he came out of the service, then they were going to go up the State and he was going to get a job.

That was better than barracks duty. And that was all the peace time Army was now. He was fed up with it, and fed up with all the hooey, boasting stories of the guys who had been in France and had seen some real action. Not that they hadn't been there, and hadn't seen action. But he'd just got fed beyond the neck hearing yarns about battles he'd been too young to be in, about the "old Army—the real outfit, with no wet eared kids around."

Those memories were in the back of his head and prompted him when he listened to Raos. Right from the first he had recognized that the old man represented luck for him. If the girl had told Raos's wife something about him, Jake Miller, she had also in her turn told him something about Raos. Not much, but enough to give him the idea that the señor was more than he looked to be, and that "once, a little time ago, he was a very big man in his own coun-

try, from which he is exiled."

Raos hadn't said it outright, there in the hall, but, from the beginning he had been able to guess at it. Revolution. These spigs were always starting revolutions. Raos and some other guys were probably going to start a revolution, down in Raos's old country, where probably Raos had once been president. That's why Raos had stopped him and why Raos had taken the trouble to find out about him, and now called him sergeant.

And his guess had been right. Inside, when he had followed Raos into the flat, there had been three men there, and a lot of women, mostly dark and fat, weeping, and talking in Spanish. The three men had been alone in one room. He and Raos had gone in there and Raos had carefully shut the door. Then Raos had introduced him to the three, calling him by his full name—Sergeant Jacob Miller—formerly of the United States Army.

Those three men were all different from Raos, but just as odd. One was a big, tall man with a bald, square head with a cut like that made by a sword across his forehead. He had been introduced as Major Count Otto von Sahrburg, and had clicked his heels and jerked a little bow from his hips and stuck a round glass in his eye as he looked at him.

One of the others was small and very dark and looked like an Indian. His clothes seemed too big for him, and he didn't seem to belong in the hot, close room. His hands, Miller noticed, were thick and square, as if they had once been used at very hard work. That man's name was Jobiantes, and instinctively Miller had recognized him as a man who would be quick with a knife, a pistol or a rifle. The third man didn't seem to belong there at all. He was the only man in the room to wear his hat, a small brimmed derby. He had a diamond in his tie, and a lot on his hands. He was very fat, and when he stood up and was presented as Mr. Blummer, his coat drew tightly across his chest, and Miller could see that he wore an automatic pistol in a shoulder holster.

Then they all sat down and talked. Raos did most of the talking, and addressed Miller. He told him that he and these three men here were planning a revolution, down in the Central American country where Raos had once been president and Jobiantes the minister of war. Raos was very grave as he spoke. Slowly, he ran his long, thin fingers over his thick beard, over his forehead and hair. Everything, he said, was complete now. The expedition was ready to go. A ship with everything that the expedition would need was waiting for them off the Jersey coast.

The other patriots were ready, awaiting their leaders and arms. Already a plan of battle campaign had been drawn up. Señor Jobiantes knew the country; he had fought over it in several previous revolutions. Major Count von Sahrburg was both an aviator of considerable experience and a cavalry officer. Raos slowly brought his glance to Miller's angular, tanned, expressionless face.

Quietly, he said that while already quite complete, the expedition lacked a highly trained machine gun and infantry officer. Perhaps he, Sergeant Miller, under the existing circumstances, would take that rôle. He would receive two hundred dollars a month gold and the rank of captain. If the revolution achieved the success expected of it, of course all awards would be increased accordingly.

Señor Raos stopped speaking for a moment. He lighted a small, dark cigar and looked away from Miller. The room was silent. Miller sat with his hands clenched loosely in the pockets of the new civilian suit he had bought last week. Clearly, he thought that this was what he had been waiting for. Here was his break, the thing he had been cheated out of during the World War, just because he had been born too late.

Quite openly, he looked around the room—at Raos, at the little, sullen faced

Indian, Jobiantes, at the man called Major Count Otto von Sahrburg, and at Mr. Blummer, the gentleman in the derby hat. This wasn't, he told himself, his idea of a bunch of soldiers of fortune.

But of course they were; there was no doubting that. And in uniform, he knew, all men looked different. And in action . . .

Visions raced through his mind. He saw himself, a sword in his hand, wearing gold striped shoulder straps and dark field boots, leading an attack up a slope through palm trees and high, thick grass . . . He could feel a bucking machine gun in his hands, and see the men who squirmed, screaming and running to get away from the shrewd angles of his fire . . . He saw himself riding on a big, raw boned horse, dusty with the white dust of tropic trails, a hot gun at his hip, into a battle scarred town he had helped to take.

He could also visualize the dark eyed, half frightened, half pleased señoritas who would peer at him through their barred and latticed windows—and the one he would marry, small, dark, plump, with the name of Dolores and a rich planter for a father.

And, last of all, he could see the men of his old company, sitting in their undershirts and fatigue slacks on the beds in barracks after Sunday morning inspection, fighting for that part of the New York newspaper picture section which carried a photograph of him with the legend, "Colonel Jacob Miller, American Soldier of Fortune, and One of the Leaders in the Recent Successful Revolution".

He looked up.

Señor Raos was speaking in his deep and unhurried voice:

"What is it that you have to say to us, Sergeant? We are leaving immediately—tonight. If you do not wish to accompany us, we must ask you to stay here, in this room, for one hour, and that is all. But we hope your answer is yes."

FIFTEEN minutes later, in two taxicabs, they had left the building and bumped over dark, almost completely deserted streets to an old dock far out beyond the Bush Terminal in Red Hook. The motor launch had been waiting for them. They had left immediately. Now they were out in the open sea.

Turning slightly, the man at the wheel looked back at Miller.

"If you want to smoke," he said softly, "you can now."

Miller lighted a cigaret, settled back again for a few drags before he went below into the cabin where the others were. Life, he told himself, taking one last deep drag, was pretty good, no matter how you looked at it.

"Anyways," he said to himself, half aloud, "what the hell's the good of being a soldier unless you fight once in awhile?"

He was in the cabin with the others when the helmsman rapped on the scuttle and they piled topside to see the ship. She was small and deeply loaded, without lights of any sort. She rolled heavily on her beams as the launch was brought alongside of her, and sheets of spray flung up by her overshot stern slopped into the boat's cockpit where they stood.

Then a strong electric torch was flashed down into their faces and a voice cried out shrilly in Spanish, and a heaving line clattered down, followed by a pilot ladder that clacked against the wet, rusty sideplates. Señor Raos went first, then Count Otto von Sahrburg, who was a little bit seasick and very sullen. Panting and cursing, Mr. Blummer followed them and, as his fat hindquarters disappeared into the upper darkness, Señor Jobiantes made a short gesture toward the ladder.

"You first," he said flatly in very bad English. "I will see that your bags go up on this rope. Move, please."

A cold wind hit across the deck as Miller swung himself over the bulwark.

The place was deserted except for a man in flapping dungarees and an oilskin hat who stood by the ladder lashings. When Miller spoke to him, he answered in a language which the ex-sergeant took to be German, and gestured vaguely forward with a dirty hand. Miller went that way, stumbling over loose ends of boom balls, plate edges and winch pipe guards until he came to a steel ladder. At the head of it, his white beard flying magnificently in the wind, stood Señor Raos.

"It is you, Captain," he said, taking him by the arm and peering at him in the almost complete darkness. "Come in this direction. The ship is getting under way immediately. There will be nothing for any of us to do until tomorrow morning."

He reached out and somehow found the handle of a dimly seen door, opened it and groped inside until he found a light switch and snapped it on.

"This will be your own private room during the voyage. You will be called tomorrow morning for breakfast. Then we will begin our work. Good night, Captain."

Bowing, he shut the door.

Miller never exactly knew where that ship came from—not that it mattered. His curiosity about it was never very great. All his interest, almost from the first moment he boarded her, was concerned with what she carried as cargo, and the men aboard her. During the early part of that first night, he was too excited to sleep and spent his time unpacking his barracks bag and suitcase, stowing away his belongings in the lockers of the tight little paint-smelling cabin.

Then, until the time he fell asleep, he busied himself removing all the regimental and governmental insignia from his best tailor made uniform. With what he would replace them he did not then know. But, the thought came to him as he at last fell asleep in the narrow bunk, he didn't much care, as long as it was something different.

The next morning when he awoke wind screamed at the ship and water rushed pounding along the decks and against the door of his room. From one side to the other, as he stood at the small sink in the corner washing and shaving himself, his luggage slid back and forth, and he laughed, watching them, very pleased that he was not seasick.

He had just finished dressing in the uniform he had prepared the night before when the door opened and a man in a blue watch cap and a white jacket half entered and told him in bad English that he was wanted in the saloon. Miller nodded, pulled down his garrison cap and followed the white jacketed man out, to skid along wet, black decks and then into a badly lighted passageway. There his guide halted, silently pointing ahead, and he went on alone.

The room he entered was long and wide, ran 'cross-ships. Two big tables with high, wooden edges were in it, flanked by straight backed swivel chairs. The bulkhead paneling was of dark wood, and on three sides of the room, against the bulkheads, were hard leather settees.

All of Miller's brother officers were there, seated on the settees, except Blummer, who crouched over one table and a plate of ham and eggs. Raos and the little Jobiantes sat close together, talking softly in Spanish. The man known as Count von Sahrburg sat within a few feet of them, but with his back turned, facing the table, a brandy bottle, a glass and a pack of cards he had spread out in a game of patience.

BLUMMER raised his fork and gulped wordlessly at Miller as he came in the door, and Raos and Jobiantes looked up from their conversation and nodded, saying good morning in English. There was a place set with heavy crockery and silver beside Blummer, and he sat down silently, noticing that Blummer still wore the same clothes he had seen him

in the night before, as did the two Central Americans. Von Sahrburg briefly and wordlessly looked up from his cards as Miller sat down, and Miller could see what seemed like a smile pass over the man's bony, small featured face; and he noticed that Von Sahrburg was also dressed in uniform, wearing a short gray-green tunic, black tight trousers and black tight boots with small spurs.

Although there were no shoulder straps on Von Sahrburg's tunic, and there were darker patches of material near the cuffs where marks of rank had once been worn, there was a solid mass of ribbons on the left breast and, all but turned under from sight on the over lapel, was a black and white ribbon Miller took to be that of the Iron Cross. Somehow that made Miller angry, and he looked down at his own sleeves where he had worn, up until yesterday, his chevrons of a sergeant and his reenlistment stripes.

Raos spoke to him from across the table, and he forgot the reputed aviator and cavalryman in listening to what the tall, eternally grave Central American had to say. There were, Raos said without further prologue, five thousand rifles of Austrian manufacture with two hundred thousand rounds of ammunition for them, in the midships hold; also, in the after hold, twenty-five Thompson sub-machine guns and a large amount of ammunition for those arms. In the fore hold, due to the fact that the ship was small and her deck quarters limited, were thirty-nine other patriots, men who had been living in exile in Paris and on the Continent, but who had been too seasick to show themselves on deck last night, and were far more seasick now.

Those men and guns, during the passage at least, were to become Captain Miller's particular charge. He was to inspect the rifles and the ammunition, examine and assemble the Thompson guns and, when the weather permitted, explain their mechanisms and employment to the force of thirty-nine men who, upon landing, would form the commissioned officers of the Army of Independence. It would be very pleasant if Captain Miller would begin his work of assembling the Thompson guns right away; Señor Blummer would help him.

Raos nodded at him and at Blummer and got up, not looking at Count von Sahrburg. With Jobiantes behind him, Señor Raos strode from the saloon, swaying just a bit to the lurch of the ship.

Miller worked all that day in the saloon assembling and cleaning the Thompson guns. For a great part of the time, Mr. Blummer helped him, swabbing at cosmolined breech and firing mechanisms with a series of clean rags. Mr. Blummer, Miller found, busy at his own work of assembling, was quite deft at his task and no stranger in the company of sub-machine guns.

Near two o'clock, having finished a large luncheon, a number of games of patience and his bottle of brandy, Count von Sahrburg got up, brushed down his tunic over his small hips, screwed his glass into his left eye and stalked from the room, stepping with extreme precision over the litter of empty gun cases. As the leather covered door slammed after him, Blummer looked up from his gun breech and made an uncomplimentary and loud noise with his tongue and lips.

"A slicker," he said in his nasal yet husky voice, "a lousy snob. He pulls any o' his stuff on me, I'll smack him right on that dead pan o' his. Oh, them ribbons he wears is jake; he ain't no phony. He's seen plenty o' soldierin', all right. But, he's been playin' soldier out in Hollywood, an' he's a count, an' you an' me is booj-wah tough guys . . ."

Mr. Blummer became silent, looking over at Miller, as if for corroboration or at least a smile or nod. Miller kept on busily with his work, not lifting his head. Mr. Blummer sighed, and blew his nose with the aid of his left thumb and the side of his hand.

"This is a goofy mob, this is," he said

stubbornly, reaching for a new barrel to clean. "But you're all right, soldier, an' that guy Jobiantes, he knows his canned goods, too. Old Raos is on th' up an' up; he don't look like a guy to swing a job like this, an' he ain't—he ain't no soldier. But he's real politician, he is; when them peons down there listen to him spiel, they're willin' to go out an' boil their own mothers down fer fat. I know—I been there an' heard him."

Miller did look up at that, slackening in his work for a moment. Blummer smiled, as if he were an actor who had received a burst of applause from a difficult audience.

"Yeah," he said, still grinning," I may not look it, but I been in a coupla these run-arounds down here. Used to be a drummer for a big hardware outfit down this way, years ago. All kinds o' hardware—Gatlin' guns a specialty o' the firm. But then the boys got quiet fer awhile, along about from 1917 on, an' I cut it out. Did a little business around New York; laundry pr'tection, an' helpin' out some o' the stevedores' unions. But they're puttin' down the screws on that now, an' it's a dumb life, anyhow; too much like straight business."

Mr. Blummer took out a cigar case, chose one for himself and put the case back. Thoughtfully, he stared down at the gun he held across his plump knees.

"This here, though, is a nice racket if it's run right. An' this one's goin' smoother than good Green River. I done a lot for it; got this ship an' all the iron goods. Jobiantes done almost all th' rest. Old Raos thinks *he* did, an' we let him think it. But he ain't what you'd call a practical guy. He was a school teacher, a perfessor in th' university, until Jobiantes come along th' second time, an' set him up as president. Jobiantes is th' guy; he's real Indio, right out o' the brush. He shot down his own brother onct, for tryin' to cut into th' cake too big. Jobiantes wanted it all for himself—an' got it. Mebbe he took too much; I wasn't there then. Anyhow, some o' the stoodents an' th' officers in th' army got sore an' kicked out Raos, who was president, an' Jobiantes had to go with him. They been waitin' seven years to go back. Now they are, an' poor old Raos still thinks it was all on th' up an' up, an' that his own government was a natural an' on th' square."

Mr. Blummer tapped his derby top with greasy fingers and took a fresh hold on his cigar. He looked over at Miller, and went so far as to wink deeply at him.

"I'm tellin' you all this, Sarge," he said huskily, "because I like you, an' you seem to be a guy who knows his own business. Jobiantes has a big need for Raos. Jobiantes is a Indio—a tough, simple guy an' no talker. He ain't got no front. Raos has. That's why they're still trailin' together. Raos rung in this count guy, just like he rung in you; he says he is a man o' caste, a born officer. Yeah. Mebbe. But th' last fightin' he done was out in Hollywood, firin' blanks.

"He ain't so dumb, though, that he don't know that I know it. Me, I'm not takin' any chances with this one, Sarge. When this is set up right it'll be 'Mr. Señor Blummer, Minister o' Internal Affairs an' Finance'. An' then maybe won't some o' them oil an' rubber an' sugar companies run for third wit th' bases full? An' them wise mokes in New York think they got a real racket!"

Mr. Blummer laughed. It was the first and last time Miller was to see him do so. He put the gun he had cleaned into its case and lifted a hand toward the deadlight glass right above them in the bulkhead.

"She's quietin' down," he said. "Must be through th' Gulf Stream. Tomorra we'll be on th' other side o' Bermuda, an' you can get them monkeys outa th' forehold an' show 'em what a gun looks like. Now, we knock off; you're gettin' two hundred a month, not a week . . . Don't mind that guy Sahrburg if he tries to snoot you because he's a major an' you was just a plain sergeant. An' you want anything, come to me. I got a big cut in

this mob, an' even Jobiantes listens to me."

AS MR. BLUMMER had predicted, it turned clear that night, and the following morning when Miller went forward to the saloon for breakfast, the decks were drying in a white, warm sun and dolphins sported close alongside, breaking in short, beautiful leaps from the pale azure calm of the sea. Mr. Blummer, Jobiantes and Señor Raos stood by the passageway door leading to the saloon when he turned the corner of the midships house and they nodded back in recognition of his greeting.

Raos stood forward from the others.

"Come," he said simply, "and I will have you meet the other members of the Army of Independence. Just this morning has the weather permitted them to come on deck."

They had swung forward into the port alleyway as Raos spoke, and stood now at the fore break of the house, looking down at the well-deck. One corner of the hatch had been opened there, a batten rod pulled out and hatchboards and tarpaulins jerked back. Sitting on the hatch coaming and standing along the bulwarks in the sharp sunlight were groups of haggard, pale faced men in badly disheveled civilian clothing. Some of the younger ones, Miller noticed, wore wide red bands of silk about their waists and turned and offered clumsy military salutes as they saw Raos on the deck above.

A gentle, paternal smile came over Raos's face then, and he spoke in a clear, loud, musical voice in Spanish, with many gestures. The men who had been sitting on the hatch got up and came aft, toward the ladder foot, as did those who had been standing along the rail. They stood in a solid and silent group, looking up at Raos, listening to him with extreme, almost painful, intentness. They were of every age and type, Miller saw, with an odd sort of shock, for, somehow, he had expected them all to be young and strong men like himself.

There were some who were white haired, bald and bearded, and dressed in formal clothing, like the man who talked to them. There were others who wore cheap suits and shoes, rough flannel shirts and caps, stained with grease or soot. But they were all dark skinned, dark eyed, and that same strange intentness seemed to possess all of them, and only passed when Raos became silent, when they broke into shouts which Miller understood to be in praise of Raos.

Raos lifted up and out both his hands to them.

"*Abrazos,*" he said. "That is all now, comrades."

He turned to Miller. The smile still held on his face.

"You see, Captain?" he said softly in English. "You see? Those men will make good soldiers, good officers. They love liberty, and they love their country, and they have been away from it a very long time. But, come. You must be hungry."

That day Miller began his work of instructing the thirty-nine. He stood on the canvas of the fore hatch, Mr. Blummer squatting beside him as translator, and knocked down, reassembled and fired a Thompson gun and then one of the Austrian rifles for his pupils. Mr. Blummer's dark, round little eyes gleamed as he watched.

"You're it, Sarge," he said once. "You're th' goods. Mister Count Whatth'-Hell is hidin' up there by th' ladder head, takin' a look at how you go. An' from the glom I just got at his pan, I think he's surprised that a lousy sergeant can do so well . . . . All right, now, take these babies one by one, an' start 'em shootin' for themselves. They can practise all day tomorra an' all th' next day. Then we'll be there ready for business."

"That soon?" Miller asked.

Mr. Blummer nodded.

"That soon," he said.

THERE was a dim play of blue fire which Miller knew to be surf. There was also the far white flashing of the lighthouse on the unseen cape and, farther in, just as if a brush of luminous paint had been very briefly daubed across the rich, deep purple of the night sky, the light haze of the town.

The ship's engines had been stopped. She was hove-to and drifting inshore very slightly, her anchors still hawsed. Every sound on the ship could be clearly heard by Miller where he stood by the midships rail, watching the shore. He heard the panting clank of one winch forward, where Jobiantes and the thirty-nine patriots were working out on deck the remaining cases of rifles and ammunition.

From aft and above him he could hear the low, regularly repeated calls of the round headed third mate, where he stood clinging to the topside rungs of the little steel mainmast ladder, right under the mainmast light, which Miller had never seen burning since he had been in the ship. Behind him, with irritating regularity, was the squeaking of Count von Sahrburg's boots and the occasional jingle of his small spurs. Von Sahrburg, Miller knew, wore a high-peaked cap now, a sash and a long sword with a tarnished gold tassel; Miller had seen it all at supper.

A different sort of call came from the third mate on the mainmast. An answer came back from the bridge, where Señor Raos stood with the captain and the second mate. The third officer's cry was in a language Miller did not understand, and Señor Raos's shout to Jobiantes on the foredeck was in Spanish, but Miller almost laughed aloud, hearing; and a swift, electric sort of shock, a sudden tightening of the muscles of his stomach, came over him. They had been waiting here for the barges from shore. There they were, in a long and dark line, a faint fire of green phosphorous arrowed astern.

Miller's grip loosened on the rail. Things were all right. The town inshore was Las Chirras. It was the biggest and richest town on the coast; there were sugar mills and a rum distillery there, and a branch of the national bank. From it, to the capital forty miles away, up in the hills, ran both a narrow gage and wide gage railroad line. Miller already knew a good deal about Las Chirras and the railroad line. He had studied a map of the coast and the interior all day long, and before supper Blummer had given him a lot of additional topographical detail.

There was a company of the national army stationed in the town, but the noncommissioned men were drafted peons, who hardly knew one end of a gun from the other, and the officers were inexperienced and young, sons of wealthy and influential planters and ranch owners, who liked the army because they liked to wear uniforms and swords. Jobiantes, Blummer and Raos did not expect much trouble from that company. They expected to clean it out and disperse it the first thing when the expedition got ashore.

The next stop, and a more difficult one, was to transship the guns and ammunition from the lighters to one of the narrow gage trains which had been carefully arranged for and now was supposed to be drawn up alongside the sugar docks. There was a telegraph and telephone line from Las Chirras to the capital, and Jobiantes and the other leaders of the expedition fully expected that news of their landing would be flashed to the capital directly after they got ashore.

There were seasoned, hard fighting, professional troops in the capital, and a good motor road and plenty of trucks to carry them to Las Chirras. Also, there were three or four fast fighting planes, in the hands of American trained pilots. Those were the things to be really feared; by the time the government troops had arrived, Jobiantes and the others planned to have the expedition well into the interior and hidden in

the bush, where the assembling of the *insurrectos* could go on, under the tremendous personal magnetism of Raos. Afterward, the attack would be made on the capital itself. The important task now was to get out of Las Chirr[illegible] with the arms and ammunition before the government troops and planes arrived in force.

Miller looked down. The barges were alongside. Ropes were being passed and made fast; men in wide straw sombreros with cartridge bandoleers across their chests, and what Miller recognized as machetes thrust through their belts, were climbing aboard and standing in a tense, swift speaking group about Jobiantes and Raos. The tall old man suddenly broke from the group and came aft.

He still wore his high collar and tail coat. But upon his great bush of white hair was precariously perched a checkered cloth cap; about his waist, over one of the revolutionary red sashes, was a pistol belt, the gun itself pushed way around in back, as if the wearer were somehow secretly afraid and ashamed of it. Raos's final attempts at a military garb were the black leather puttees he wore strapped about his ankles and calves. They looked to Miller like the kind a taxi driver might wear. They were much too small, and the straps were buckled in the wrong places. Out of their tops, the old man's striped trousers ballooned in wide, wrinkled folds.

He spoke in his clear, unhurried voice as he approached. He addressed both Miller and Von Sahrburg:

"Gentlemen, we are ready to leave the ship. Luck is with us. Our train is at the sugar docks. We will land there and immediately start to transship the arms and ammunition. Mr. Blummer and Captain Miller have been elected for the honor of leading the attack upon the *cuartel* and barracks. Our allies, the men who have brought the barges, assure us that no one in the town except themselves is aware of our arrival or plans. I would be very pleased if you would now take your places in the first barge; the captain of the ship, for very good reasons of his own, is desirous of leaving here as soon as possible."

Jobiantes and Mr. Blummer were already in the first barge. Mr. Blummer was dressed as usual, the derby hat far down over his ears, an unlighted cigar caught firmly between his teeth. Jobiantes, though, had shed his coat, vest, collar and tie. He wore a large pistol belt and two automatics, the holster bottoms fastened professionally to his thighs with leather thongs. Somewhere he had picked up a ragged straw sombrero. He looked little different from the barefoot peons who were now casting off from the ship, locking their long, clumsy sweeps and sweating up a tattered lugsail.

Miller worked forward and to Mr. Blummer's side, in the bow. Both of them looked ahead, toward the beach and the town.

"Quiet," whispered Mr. Blummer suddenly. "Too damn quiet. But you heard that you an' me are goin' to go up an' chop th' *cuartel* an' th' barracks. That'll be all right. We'll take a Thompson apiece. Some of these other guys is supposed to go with us, but don't bother with them. String along with me an' we'll do th' job."

Mr. Blummer lapsed into silence, his arms crossed over his plump chest, one foot upon a pile of rifle cases. Standing so, he vaguely reminded Miller of a statue he had once seen. It startled him a little to remember that it had been one of Napoleon. Aft, where they worked at the big sweeps, the peons laughed and even softly sang a little from time to time. It seemed to Miller, who still had that queer, tense feeling in the pit of his stomach, that they took this thing as some sort of very good joke.

Jobiantes and Señor Raos stood beside the man at the tiller, talking with him in quiet tones. Off to port, the lighthouse rays swung, blinked, went out; swung back in wide wings of gold.

Except for the tingling sensation in his stomach and the tightening of his muscles, Miller was very calm, very peaceful.

THEY could see the sugar docks now—long, dark, gaunt structures of iron. At the shore end—a vague black huddle of shadows—was a small tin shed and the outlines of the cars and the little engine.

"No one there," said Mr. Blummer. "Th' watchman's been taken care of. Thank God a hundred bolivars goes a long ways in this country sometimes."

Miller inclined his head to indicate that he thought so too, and then looked astern. The other barges were strung out in a long line in their wake. No noises came from them except the dip and splash of the sweeps, the slow slatting of their sails and halyards. Crowded in their bows, their faces in this light like pale disks of ivory, were the rest of the patriots. There was a glint here and there of a rifle barrel. Miller swung back, oddly pleased. They seemed quite calm, those guys—as if they were no more nervous than he was. At that thought he smiled, but only briefly.

They came right in under the offshore overhang of the dock. One of the peons had found a ladder there and swung up along it. He jerked after him the hawser end which was passed, to make it fast about a bollard.

Jobiantes went up first. He carried one of his automatics in his right hand, and Miller noticed now that his feet were bare. Mr. Blummer readjusted his derby.

"Now we go, Sarge," he said. "There's your piece right there, an' a bag o' clips for it. I'll show you when we get up on th' dock."

They did not wait long on the dock.

"I want you, *chico*, an' you, an' that one," said Mr. Blummer simply in Spanish. "Come on. There's your guns an' ammunition. Just follow me an' th' señor here, an' do what we say. We're goin' up an' call on th' *jefe civil* at th' jail an' th' barracks."

They walked down the dock in complete silence. It was a very long dock. It took them, Miller imagined, all of ten minutes to get to the shore end of it. There they passed the little rusty iron cars of the narrow gage train and the engine.

"Fire's out," observed Mr. Blummer as they passed. "But them little donkeys start up fast with a coupla palmetto trunks an' some oil soaked waste. They oughta have it pretty well loaded by th' time we get back." He pointed with the blunt muzzle of the Thompson gun toward the sheet tin shack at the end of the dock and the backless wooden chair beside it. "Watchman's usually there; really a member of th' Guardia Civil. But that don't make any difference to a handful o' good money."

They passed from the end of the dock and walked over the ties of the narrow gage line. Their feet kicked up white dust and the powder of wood cinders, and Miller lifted his piece higher so that the stuff would not get into the firing mechanism of the gun. The town was ahead now. A regular road paralleled the tracks. Palmettos and tall palms lined it. Their fronds rattled noisily in the slight breeze from the sea. The first houses were nothing but palm leaf shacks, and smelled of chickens, goats and people who did not wash very often. Beyond, white, dim and very beautiful, was the town itself. Miller smiled as he saw it.

In some of the palm thatched huts dogs began to bark. But Blummer did not seem to pay any attention to them, and the men went on just as they had before, except that they now followed the regular road instead of the uneven ties of the tracks. After a few minutes the palm huts and the yapping dogs were behind. They were right in the town.

To Miller the houses all looked the same: whitewashed, with tiled roofs, heavy, dark doors and shuttered, light-

less windows. They seemed utterly silent and utterly deserted. The sounds of their footsteps seemed to echo with an alarming loudness on the cobblestones which were now underfoot, but no light was made in any of the houses, and there was no other sound. Miller took a fresh grip on the pistol-grips and stock of the Thompson gun; his hands ached, the way he had been carrying it.

"We turn here."

It was Blummer who had spoken. Miller's muscles jerked as he heard the quietly spoken words; for a moment, intent upon the odd, close silence of this town, he had forgotten the presence of the other man at his side. They turned sharply to their right, into a dark and stinking alley, leaving a shadowed, empty square behind them. At the end of the alley they came out into another square, but smaller this time, and not cobbled, and with a bronze statue of a man on a horse in the middle of it.

"*Cuartel* an' barracks is right there." Mr. Blummer took out the cigar to spit. He lowered the hand that had held the cigar and Miller could hear a click as the other set his piece in the firing position. Mechanically, he did the same with his own gun.

"See th' sentry-box there?" asked Mr. Blummer. "Should be a sentry in it. Mebbe the bloke's asleep."

He turned and spoke softly in Spanish to the five peons who stood behind them.

"All right," he said to Miller. "They say they don't know. That's natural—they never know nothin' anyways. Well, let's go ahead an' see. Anybody fires er challenges, flop down an' fire back. This is th' only way to get in. If it gets too tough, beat it back for th' docks. You know th' way? O.K!"

The Thompson gun at his hip, Mr. Blummer stepped out across the plaza. Miller walked with him, evenly, stride for stride. Behind them, shuffling, panting quite audibly, came the five peons.

They stood before the striped sentry-box, staring into its shadows. It was empty. Mr. Blummer muttered a curse which Miller could hardly hear.

"Stay right here," he whispered after a moment of silence. "I'm goin' over an' glom th' joint myself." He turned, and whispered in Spanish to the five behind. To Miller, "I told 'em to face down th' plaza; you face up. Fire at the first guy you see. If you hear me go to work inside, you'll know it ain't chipmunks."

MR. BLUMMER moved off toward the wide, darkly sprawled bulk of the building across the plaza. Miller watched him, sweat on his forehead, his hands shaking just a little upon the grips of the gun. Now he could no longer see him; he had gone from sight into the shadows. Miller changed his position; changed it again. He counted to one hundred, five hundred. He was at eight hundred and sixty-three when he heard and saw Mr. Blummer again.

Mr. Blummer was running, and cursing as he ran. He kept on cursing, in Yiddish, Spanish and English, when he got back to Miller.

"It's a jam!" His voice was very hoarse. "There ain't a mug in th' place. Not one! They've all pulled out. Ain't even a rifle in a rack, or a bayonet. They even let th' town drunk outa th' *cuartel*. It's—" he checked himself, visibly. "Come on," he said, his voice becoming ominous. "We got to lam back to th' dock, *muy pronto*."

The streets were just as silent and deserted as when they had first come through them, but now they ran, careless of any noise, the heavy ammunition sacks they carried banging and jarring against their ribs and sides. They saw no one; heard no one; came so to the palm huts, then the dock.

There was activity there. Smoke, a thin twist of steam and a red-gold column of sparks came from the little wood fed engine. Flashlights and lanterns carved the darkness up and down the dock, and they could see the sweat-

gleaming torsos of men, swinging up ammunition and rifle cases from the lighters and into the shallow box cars.

Mr. Blummer yelled in Spanish at the first man he saw, and Señor Raos came skidding down from the cab of the engine, his face and beard smeared with grease and wood ash. Blummer caught him by the arm, led him away a few paces, and Miller could hear them talking rapidly together in what was to him incomprehensible Spanish. He stood there, the Thompson gun heavy in his hands, not knowing just what to do. Finally he turned, to find the five men who had gone with them to the *cuartel* standing behind him in a silent group.

"*Vamos, usted!*" he yelled at them, motioning toward the box cars and the work to be done there. "*Vamos!*"

He felt better then, felt that he had in some way justified and partly fulfilled his rank of captain here. He looked down the dock. Von Sahrburg sat there on a pile of ammunition cases, his tasseled sword between his knees, a long cigaret hanging from one corner of his mouth.

"You're the hell of a soldier, you are, squarehead," he whispered. "I'd like nothing better than a good sock at your jaw right now!"

He turned. Mr. Blummer and Señor Raos were coming down the dock toward him, and both men were running. Blummer looked over as he came by and yelled at him without stopping:

"Where's Jobiantes? Y' see Jobiantes, Sarge?"

Blummer kept on, all along the line of cars, seeming to repeat the same question in Spanish to every one he met, for Miller could hear Jobiantes' name spoken each time. Raos had stopped a few paces beyond Miller. He stood quite still. His shoulders were slouched, and from under the checkered cap, which he wore with the vizor in the back, like a schoolboy, tufts of his thick white hair clouded down over his face. He was staring out to sea. Miller stared in that direction too. The ship was not there. It had gone. Nothing was there.

Under his breath, and not yet quite understanding, Miller cursed. Mr. Blummer was coming back now; Miller could hear him. The fat man was still running; sweat had soaked his collar, shirt and tie; it dripped from his hands down along the barrel of the Thompson gun and to the ground.

He stopped beside Miller. He spoke in a rapid, very hoarse whisper:

"Jobiantes has pulled out—scrammed. It's a sell-out. The rat has hung a frame on us. Sold out to them guys; got us here, with all th' iron goods, made his own dicker with them, an' left us holdin' th' bag. Get it? We got to blow. Pull out o' town with th' jerk train here. No other way. They'd catch us, sure as hell, out to sea, if there was a tub to go in. Help 'em throw th' rest on there. We get out o' town, back in th' brush, mebbe we got a chance."

He was jerking at the buttons of his jacket as he spoke. He had it off now. He wrapped the Thompson gun in it and put it down. Then he ran toward the cars, yelling and cursing in Spanish. But then he skidded to a halt, swung and stared toward the town, and the hills behind the town.

The plane was coming low and very fast. The flames from its exhausts were blue, sharp daggers which alone made it visible. To his surprise, standing there, Miller found that he was laughing. This, though, he knew, even as he puzzled at his laughter, was what he was after. This was action.

He went down on one knee. He lifted the ammunition sack off, over his head. He placed it beside him and opened it. He lifted the Thompson gun. He aimed right between those twin streams of exhaust flame, and fired.

Mr. Blummer took the gun from him. It was after the plane had dropped its third bomb—the one that hit the sea end of the dock and the last four cars. Mr. Blummer yelled into his ear, scooping up the ammunition sack and pulling him

toward the remaining cars.

"Cut it, you! Leave be! There's more comin'—hear 'em? We're pullin' out! Jump!"

Miller never knew who drove the train—not that it mattered. He remembered standing up in a corner of a jerking, bouncing, box car, the Thompson again in his hands, and firing burst after burst at that plane and the two others which now dived down behind it.

The train moved quickly. It took them through the town, and out the other side of town, and along a towering, sharp, black slope and toward a tunnel mouth, whose white stone structure stood out like huge human teeth against the inner darkness. The train stopped there, within a hundred yards of the tunnel, hit the torn rails and lunged sickeningly off the track, grinding down through the palmettos and the brush toward the swamp which lay facing the sharp slope on the other side of the rails.

THEN the three planes dived all at once. The green lash of their tracer bullets made a kind of lacework target before them. Squatting in the swamp grass, blood from a scalp gash in one eye, Miller fired at that. But suddenly the gun was silent, empty, in his hands, and he knew that it was no use, that his firing only offered a target for the men in the planes above.

He looked around him, trying to see clearly. Men moaned in the darkness, and he could smell the sharp sweetness of fresh blood. But a voice called from up the slope, and he recognized it as Blummer's. He was being called by name.

"You all right? Come on, then! Lam for th' tunnel!"

He got to his feet and moved toward Blummer's voice. He slipped and fell several times climbing the bank, and once he trod unseeing on the body of a dying man, who screamed out at him and thrashed at his legs with fluttering, powerless hands. But Blummer was waiting for him on top of the bank, and caught him by the shoulders, dragged him along into the coolness and darkness of the tunnel.

He heard Raos there, then some of the other men who had been with them on the ship. Some one struck a light, and he saw Major Count von Sahrburg. He sat against the curving wall of the tunnel. His peaked cap was gone, and there was blood on his face and tunic, but he still had his eyeglass in place, and sat with his sword between his knees. Hardly knowing that he did so, Miller cursed the man as he crouched down beside Blummer.

Mr. Blummer was whispering to him.

"Looks like we're licked. There's barb' wire all set across the other end o' th' tunnel, an' machine guns an' lots o' riflemen behind that. Th' only way we could get out is back, down th' tracks, th' way we come, an' toward th' town. Up here, on th' right hand, is a cliff that runs for a'most half a mile; that's why they cut this tunnel—to go through it. An' on the left, the side th' train dumped down into, is th' swamp; an' there's no goin' through that. It's a quagmire. Snakes, alligators, pois'nous eels in th' muck, too. An' now they're settin' up machine guns on th' cliff an' down th' tracks. If they don't get us here in time, this way, they'll let them air bombs loose on us; wreck th' tunnel an' us, too. But I don't think they'll have to wreck their nice tunnel; they'll have us before that."

"They've got us pretty. They want old Raos, I guess. Mebbe me, too. Jobiantes must 'a' figured this would be a flop if it was played on the straight, an' sold for plenty. Anyhow, there's about two hundred grand worth o' good iron goods strewed all up an' down th' tracks between here an' th' sugar docks. Ol' Raos is a'most off his nut; he don't quite understand—not yet. But, string along with me, Sarge, an' we'll see if we can't fox these smart boloneys yet. I ain't been in any worse boxes, but I been in a couple just as bad. Them

other guys is makin' a barricade now, an' your old pal, Count No Account, ain't lifted his hand yet. They'll stretch his lily-white neck for him!"

While they worked, building the barricade, prying up the ties and scraping fox holes behind it with their gun butts, they heard the slow advance of the troops who had come to get them. They lay still for a short time, listening to the click of hobnails, the creak of pack straps and the grunts of the officers and sergeants. But then the nerves of one of the younger men, a man lying on the other side of Señor Raos, sharply broke and he came to his feet and yelled, rapidly firing his gun.

A blast of machine gun fire killed him instantly, and with him two men who had risen up to see the effects of his fire. For awhile afterward the others lay in silence, no longer bothering to work at their barricade. Señor Raos spoke, in Spanish so clear and so simple that Miller, even, could understand it. They could not see him, but he seemed to address all of them.

"I am going now. We will all die here like cornered rats otherwise. We have been betrayed, but we have not lost our honor."

The richness of his voice came to an end. They heard him getting up, and the calm, soft whisper of words as he offered a prayer for his soul in Latin. Blummer tried to speak, but the others did not seem to hear. They were the men Miller had seen and trained on the ship. They were the last of the thirty-nine patriots, whose dreams during long years of exile were ending now like this. They were standing up, holding their guns before their bodies.

"You are ready, *caballeros?*" asked Señor Raos.

No one answered him, but they all moved forward in a solid, silent body. The last of the thirty-nine, it seemed, also knew how to die . . .

First one machine gun, two, then another began to enfilade them before they were five yards beyond the tunnel mouth. Miller, where he lay with Mr. Blummer's surprisingly strong hand on his shoulder, could not see any of that. He could only imagine it, from the thud of bullets, the staggering pound of feet, the screams, and then the silence.

IT WAS probably an hour or so later when the coral stain of the false tropic dawn etched into being the palmetto fronds and allowed those in the tunnel a brief chance to see. Three of them were alive here, Miller saw. Mr. Blummer lay right beside him, steadily chewing on what at one time had been a cigar. On the other side, crouched down and utterly motionless, was Count von Sahrburg. He spoke, in his gutturally clipped English.

"Some of those out there who went with Señor Raos," he said slowly, "still live. They do not know what to do. They are untrained; they are not soldiers. It is now that they lack leadership; lack a real officer." He stopped, and did not speak any more. The dim glow of light was fading before the return of darkness which marked the real dawn. But then he spoke again. "I think I shall go," he said. "I am quite certain that one or two of them out there are gentlemen at least . . ."

He did not look at Miller or Mr. Blummer; he just stood up, and took his long, curved sword in one hand, his pistol in the other. Neither did he seem to hear when Mr. Blummer looked up at him and bluntly suggested that he was a "sap."

He walked the first two or three paces, then he ran. His spurs made a jangling, musical little sound, and one last ray of light fell on the clean length of his sword blade. He was an excellent target. There must have been at least fifty rounds through his body before he had gone eight steps. He must have died at once, for, back in the tunnel, they could hear no sound, no cry of pain or fear.

"Ain't that," asked Mr. Blummer after a long period of silence, "what they call dyin' like a officer an' a gentleman?"

Slowly, very slowly, he shifted the position of his derby hat. "Too bad," he whispered in a kind of afterthought, "they didn't have a movie camera among them machine guns."

There was a silence then, while neither of them spoke, and even the machine gunners and the infantrymen before them were still. It was broken by a whistle blast and a clearly shouted order.

"They're comin'," diagnosed Mr. Blummer. "They must 'a' worked up as far as where Raos an' th' others got it, counted noses there, an' figured out there's on'y a couple o' us left here. Hear 'em come?"

Miller could hear them very plainly: The thundering, timed rush of many feet, the wild, blood lusting yells from many throats.

"Infantry!" shouted Mr. Blummer in his ear. "Boy, what a break! Get up! We beat it for th' swamp! When you're acrost th' tracks, just jump!"

They rose, ran a pace, two paces, stumbled over the steel of the tracks, then jumped, rolling over and over, while above, right where they had been, the infantrymen poured screaming into the tunnel. There was thick, harsh and tough grass where they fell, and they crawled down through it like snakes, and as silently. They did not look back.

Suddenly, wholly without warning, they were in the swamp. It oozed blackly up about their knees, caught at their bodies, their strength, tried to suck them down. But they tore loose, and up, out of it. They dragged at mangrove roots and small, soggy clumps of grass and rotten logs. And somehow, in some way they did not even understand, they went on.

Mr. Blummer brought Miller through the swamp. It took him a day and a night to do it. During those hours both of them almost died many times, and more than once Miller wished consciously for death, to release him from the horror and the agony which clouded down upon him. But Blummer would not let him die; refused to let him die. At times, when he was too exhausted to do anything else, he talked to him.

"Come on, guy. Come on, Sarge. We'll beat them boloneys yet. Why not? Ain't we lickin' this place? Ain't it all good goin' on th' other side, an' don't I know all th' *picas* to Sam Rimon? Say yes, you moke, or I'll slap you down! Yes it is, anyways. An' there's a Blue D freighter in at San Rimon docks now; I know it. We'll catch her. We'll get a bath an' a drink an' a gutful o' chow, an' we'll laugh at this. Laugh like hell. Come on . . ."

They came upon the little town of San Rimon near noon of the third day. San Rimon dozed, white, calm and ugly, in the heat of the siesta sun. The two men staggered around the town, and came at last to the one dock. It was long and of iron, like the ones at Las Chirras. Warped in alongside of it was a small steamer with a blue D on its stack. Steam fretted in a thin silver plume from the exhaust valve on the stack; the flag of the United States hung at her foretruck; on the halyards was the blue and white pilot flag. Where they crawled through the last of the cover toward her, the two men heard the bang of hatch wedges being driven home, and the tentative rumble of the anchor windlass as the carpenter turned it over.

"Come on," croaked Mr. Blummer. "She's pullin' out. Get up an' walk, you sissy!" Bodily he jerked the other man erect. "I know her, I tell you; I know th' chief mate an' th' skipper. She'll be like home."

They stayed erect. They walked. They came to the end of the dock and the tin shack there. Slowly they edged around that shack. A man who had some months before been a sugarfield peon sat there all but asleep in the sun. He wore a uniform cap with a cracked patent leather vizor. He wore a khaki uniform which was too big for him, and which he had not washed. Between his knees was a bayoneted rifle. In his belt

was a machete.

Feeling their shadow cut off the sun's warmth, the soldier opened one eye. Then Mr. Blummeer reached for the rifle. He got it, but as he raised it, the soldier tipped back in his chair and fell. And when he rolled quickly over and up, the machete was in his hands. He seemed to laugh silently, with a sort of deep, subtle pleasure as he came forward to meet Mr. Blummer, watching from the corner of one eye the other mud splashed, stinking scarecrow who leaned weakly against the side of the shack.

But then Mr. Blummer lunged at him with the rifle, and he struck back. They struck at the same time. Through the fog and the swirl of lights which played before his eyes, Miller watched those two figures, watched them without emotion, without thought.

He saw them come together, merge, separate. He heard the sounds of their blows. Then they fell, first Mr. Blummer, then the other man, the one in khaki, who strained with both hands now at the rifle which hung from his breast.

Miller shook his head. You couldn't kill a man with a bayonet that way. The drill books said you couldn't. But then he straightened, and some of the fog that danced before him dissipated at the familiar lash of Mr. Blummer's voice.

"G'wan, you mug!" it said. "G'wan! What you waitin' for—payday? G'wan! I'll see you—later . . ."

The voice stopped on a choking note, but Miller was going on, not consciously knowing that he did so. In a minute he was on the Blue D dock, just in time.

IT WAS a clear, bitter, beautiful day when the Blue D freighter pulled her hook from Quarantine and went on, up through the Narrows and toward her berth in Brooklyn. Miller stood aft, on the poop, watching it all. He was clean. Most of the body sores and wounds were healed now. The shoes the third assistant had given him fitted pretty well. The smart breeze swept at his face, his bare, patched clothing; it was like sharp wine in his lungs.

He could see the whole bay now. He could see the Old Lady, and the Battery, the buttressed magnificence of Manhattan and the straight shaft of silver which was the Empire State Building. He swung a little to the right so that he could see Governors Island.

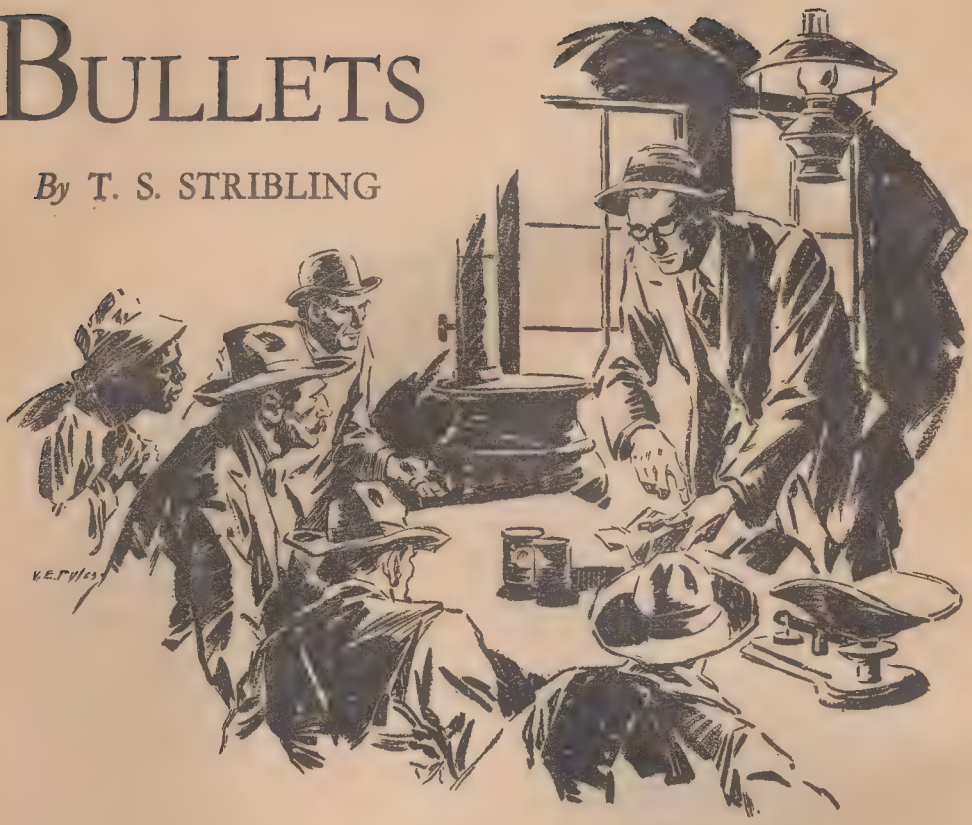
Slowly, then, he shut his eyes, trying to remember the last time he had seen it. To do so brought it all back—the faces, the names, the ship, the town—everything. He opened his eyes. He shook his head and smiled, thinking of what he had to tell them, over there in the outfit, when he got back.

He reached one hand, still shaking a bit with the last traces of the fever, down into a trousers pocket. The nickel was there. He brought it out, turned it, rubbed it, smiled at it.

"Ferry fare," he said, the breeze whipping the words from him so that he could not hear them. "Enough to get you back over to the Island, just in time for chow." He turned the nickel once more in his hand, then dropped it carefully into his pocket. "But what the hell," he asked himself after a time, still pondering the extent of his material wealth, "is pay—to a real soldier of fortune?"

BULLETS

By T. S. STRIBLING



AT THE door of Munro's General Merchandise store in La Belle, Florida, Sawyer, the deputy sheriff, stopped an old negro woman and the white man who followed her.

"You can't come in," he explained patiently. "They're holding an inquest in here."

The old crone quavered out that she knew it, that she was bringing in Slewfoot's lawyer.

The deputy looked at the well dressed white man disapprovingly.

"I hope you're not stoopin' to defend a nigger cowhand that shot his own boss?"

"No, I'm neither defending nor prosecuting," assured the stranger.

"You have to do one or t'other if you're a lawyer."

"I'm not a lawyer, I'm a psychologist. I told this old woman if her son were guilty, my services would simply assure his conviction, that I would be a much greater danger for him than a jury itself."

The officer frowned and looked at the stranger as if he had not heard him aright.

"A psychologist," he repeated vaguely. "I don't exactly see how a psychologist would come in on a murder investigation."

"I'm afraid," snapped the stranger in Yankee impatience, "that I can't explain to you the connection between murder and psychology in two words."

"Well, that's all right," drawled the Florida man leisurely. "Take four words if you need 'em—take as many as you want. You ain't goin' to git in noway, so you've got all the time there is to tell

me what you would do if you could git in."

The man gave the faint grin of a rustic who feels that he has put a city man in his place.

The psychologist half turned away, but the old woman began pleading:

"Oh, Mas' Poggioli, please don' fly off de han'l' an' leave Slewfoot by hese'f. Please tell Mistuh Sawyah whut you gwi' do inside fuh my po' boy Slewfoot."

The well groomed gentleman controlled his temper, studied the guard for a moment as if reducing his thoughts to words sufficiently simple for the fellow to understand.

"Let me see. Murder—murder is a physical action impelled by some motive or motives, is it not?"

The deputy sheriff of Hendry County blinked his eyes.

"I mean," said the psychologist impatiently, "if one man kills another he has a reason for doing it, hasn't he?"

"Oh, yes, yes," ejaculated the guard, suddenly seeing that this was what the first sentence meant.

"Very well; when you put a thought into action, you leave traces of your motive in every object you have touched; to choose a musical analogy, shall I say that every detail of your instrumentation reflects the dominant chord of your purpose—do you know what I'm talking about?"

The deputy scratched his head.

"Not yet."

"Tchk! Tchk! Listen: When you do anything, your motive impresses itself on everything you touch. You go through an action such as this murder, say. Very well; every trace you leave points to your mood, your motive and your identity as plainly as a trail of torn paper. There is no way to avoid it."

The deputy became somewhat interested in what, up to this point, he had considered a meaningless jargon.

"Couldn't a man watch out an' hide his trail?" he inquired shrewdly.

Mr. Poggioli dropped his hands hopelessly.

"Don't you see what an absurdity your proposition involves? When you say 'watch out', you mean 'take thought'. That introduces a second motive. This second motive produces results in its turn which are just as easily read as the first. In other words, no matter how many times a man goes over his own trail, putting out his own tracks, he must finally leave his last footprints quite open to view. Now, surely, you understand that."

Mr. Sawyer was astonished to catch a ray of light in the limbus of the psychologist's reasoning.

"Well, now, I'll be darned," he ejaculated. "That does sound reasonable. A man couldn't put out his own tracks, could he, because he'd make some more when he went back to put 'em out." He pulled at his chin. "Yes, sir, that's plumb reasonable."

He paused, thinking, then started off with a new breath:

"Howsomever, this murder ain't anything so complicated as all that. Slewfoot shot old man Jake Sanderson twict because the old man wouldn't advance him any money on his wages. That is, either Slewfoot or Finn Labby, a white man, shot him. They was both workin' for the old man an' both of 'em was in the store here when he was killed. Two shots were far'd an' the jury has jest about decided the nigger far'd both of 'em."

The psychologist stood pondering this statement of the case.

"You knew both of these cow herders?"

"Shore—worked with 'em before I got app'inted deputy sher'ff."

"Was the negro the sort of fellow who wanted to give orders, or was it his habit to wait and do what he was told?"

"He waited, of course, an' done what he was told—he was a nigger."

"Mm-m! Then if that was his mental habit, don't you think it reasonable to assume that he followed the lead of the

white man in this as in everything else? Isn't it probable?"

The deputy frowned and twisted his mouth in a fashion that showed he was thinking.

"Now, by George, that's a p'int," he decided slowly, "an' a very plain one, too. I believe the jury ort to hear that."

"It's slight," disclaimed the originator.

"Big or little, I say it's so. Slewfoot was a triflin' nigger an', if for onct in his life, that's a p'int in his favor, I say the jury ort to know it. Jest you keep this crowd back, mister, for half a minute, an' I'll step in an' tell 'em."

He lifted his voice and called to the villagers in front of the door:

"Hey, you folks, this man's my deputy while I'm inside. Don't nobody come past him!"

WITH that he went inside to the jury at the back end of the store. The psychologist could see him talking and gesticulating, and presently he came back with a smile of satisfaction on his brown face.

"Well, they had to swaller it." He nodded. "They were fixin' to return their verdict that old Jake was shot by Slewfoot, but now they've changed it to either Slewfoot or Finn Labby."

"I believe you said Mr. Sanderson was shot twice," observed the psychologist.

"No, jest onct."

"You will excuse me, but your original statement was twice," insisted Poggioli.

"No; I said they shot at him twict—an' they did—but the first shot missed him. They jest hit old man Jake one time."

"Mm-m," murmured the psychologist. "And where did the other bullet strike?"

"In the wall."

"Were both bullets fired out of the same gun?"

"I don't know—how could you tell?"

"Cut them out and compare them; if they're the same caliber, with the same rifle marks on them, then one man shot both bullets and you can excuse the other man."

"Shore, shore, that's a fact, an' it runs right alongside ol' man Munro's argyment, too."

"Who's Munro?"

"The man who owns this store."

"What's his argument?"

"Why-y—er—derned if I know. He's got a clippin' out of a paper tellin' how this thing ort to be done. He's tryin' to git the boys to dig out the balls, an' Doctor Livermore is cuttin' the ball out of the body, but the jury figgers since the bullet in the wall didn't hit nobody, it don't make no diff'runce. I see now it does an' I believe I'll step back an' tell the boys what you say about it."

This was carried out and Poggioli was again placed in the deputy's stead at the door. The old negro woman edged up to him and said in a shaky voice—

"See dah, Mas' Poggioli, you 'bout to git my Slewfoot out o' dis trouble wid one word."

"If the bullet in the corpse is different from the bullet in the wall, your son will be in worse trouble than ever," cautioned the psychologist.

"Why?" asked the old woman, mystified.

"Because that will show both men shot at Mr. Sanderson."

At this the old crone puckered up her brows and began a low praying that the two bullets would be alike when they were cut out.

Poggioli listened to this for a few moments and finally said—

"Aunt Rose, there is no use praying for the bullets to be something when they are cut out, because whatever they are, they are that now; and while the Lord might conceivably change a future condition, I should think it would be beyond even His power to change what has already happened."

The old woman nodded.

"Yes, suh, yes, suh, Mas' Poggioli!" and then went on mumbling, "Oh, Lawd, let dem bullets be jes' alike an' save po'

Slewfoot!"

Her prayer was interrupted by a white woman attempting to enter the door. When the psychologist explained that no one was allowed inside, she said she wanted to do some trading.

At this a heavy old man with a square cut face came forward and called to the psychologist to let her in, that his trade had to go on, inquest or no inquest. The woman bought a package of soda and handed the old man a dollar bill. The storekeeper started to his cash drawer, but paused halfway, turned and came to the door.

"Any of you fellows got change for a dollar?" he inquired.

There was a general thrusting of hands into pockets. One of the onlookers produced a handful of small change and counted out the dollar.

The psychologist watched this incident without much attention when the old man looked at him and asked—

"Air you the stranger who told Sawyer to have them bullets cut out?"

The scientist said that he was.

"Well, by gum, I'm glad there's one man o' sense in this crowd. I been ding-dinging at them boys all mornin' to cut out them bullets. Suppose you come on back here with me an' tell 'em yourself, why it ort to be done."

Poggioli nodded.

"Certainly, that suits me; I've been wanting to go in, but—"

He was following the storekeeper to the rear of the building when the deputy called out.

"Hey, there, mister, you cain't come back here. I deputized you as guard."

"Aw, thunder an' nation!" exclaimed the storekeeper. "This man's got good ideas. Let him come back, Sawyer, an' it'll save you prancin' up an' down the store ever' two minutes."

"That's with the jury, it ain't with me," disclaimed the deputy.

"Oh, all right, let him come on," called the foreman of the jury.

When Poggioli reached the rear of the store, the spokesman of the jurors asked just what he meant about the bullets being alike, and what did it mean if they were alike.

This was interrupted by old man Munro, the storekeeper, saying:

"Why, he means jest exactly what I was tellin' you boys. I got a clippin' that explains it. They call it—lemme see—they call it ballistics, don't they, mister?"

"I believe so."

"Well, the clippin' is right over here in my desk. I cut it out of a Sunday paper six months ago. I'll show it to you."

He shuffled to a tall desk near the back door and returned to the psychologist with a yellowed clipping.

POGGIOLI glanced at it out of courtesy to the old man, but he was really attentive to the scene before him. The dead man lay on the floor quite close to the counter. Over him stooped the village doctor probing for the bullet.

Some of the jurymen were talking among themselves—

"Curious thing for a cowhand to shoot his boss over a little money—"

The foreman asked the storekeeper—

"You say they was quarrelin' amongst theirse'ves when you left them in here for a minute, Mr. Munro?"

"Yeh, Finn an' Slewfoot was both devilin' old man Jake for some money, an' he kep' puttin' 'em off, sayin' he didn't have any."

"An' fin'ly they shot him?" questioned a juror.

"That I don't know. I reckon they did. Jest then ol' man Ike Newton drove up with a truckload of oranges. I went out to count the crates an' while I was outside countin', I heard two booms in the store. They was so muffled I wasn't shore they was shots, an' me not expectin' anything like that either; so I finished my tally. When I went back in the store there was ol' man Jake down on the floor, openin' an' shuttin' his mouth, an' his two cow-

hands was gone. I run for Doc Livermore here, but when we got back, ol' Jake was dead."

The physician glanced around, nodded at this and resumed his work.

"So it's a question of which of the two hired men shot him?" queried the psychologist of the foreman.

"That's right, sir."

"Were you jurymen acquainted with these two cowhands?"

"Oh, yes, we're all cattlemen. Finn an' Slewfoot have worked for every man on this jury at one time or another."

"Then of these two men which was the more irritable and high tempered?"

Another juror answered—

"Why, Finn Labby. He was always flyin' off the handle."

The psychologist nodded.

"Taking this case on its face value, then, gentlemen, isn't it probable that the higher tempered man of this pair shot Mr. Sanderson? Isn't it reasonable that the waspish Finn Labby shot him and the easy going negro did not?"

The foreman of the jury hesitated for several moments.

"That sounds pretty good, mister," he said at last, "but if you must know—we think Slewfoot done it."

"Slewfoot!" ejaculated Poggioli, astonished and puzzled.

"Yes, sir, we jest about know that Slewfoot done it."

"Why?"

"Because he was jest the kind of nigger you described—easy goin' an' biddable."

The psychologist stood silent for several moments. Finally he said:

"Gentlemen, either my sense of logic is bad or my viewpoint doesn't agree with yours. I produce a reason which seems to me to clear my client; you gentlemen use the very same reason to condemn him. If we have no common ground of understanding, I think I had better withdraw." And he made a slight bow and turned to the door.

The old negro woman fell into a visible trembling and began praying aloud for God to cause the white man to stay and talk for Slewfoot. The foreman turned to the old negress.

"Don't be so noisy, auntie." He then glanced at another juror and said, "S'pose we tell him?"

The juror addressed blinked his eyes.

"Well, all right—but there ain't a bit o' tellin' what that man'll figger out from it."

The foreman turned to the deputy sheriff.

"Mr. Sawyer, tell him."

At this the deputy beckoned Poggioli to follow him. He led the way to the back door and when the two were out of earshot, Sawyer nodded sidewise at the jury and said in a low tone—

"Them fellers think Slewfoot was put up to shoot ol' man Jake."

"Put up to it!"

"Why, shore; you know, pickin' a quarrel about money was jest one way to start trouble."

Mr. Poggioli was suddenly enlightened.

"Oh, yes, that's why Slewfoot would have to be—biddable?"

"Why, of course," agreed the deputy. "An' it's dollars to doughnuts that one o' them jurymen theirse'ves paid Slewfoot to kill ol' man Jake. Shoo! We jest know one of us done it—but we don't know which one; an', really, we don't want to know which one."

The psychologist stood staring at the foreman, moved by a sense of ghoulish humor.

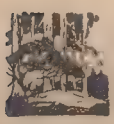
"Do you mean to say that just any member of that jury had sufficient cause of animosity toward Mr. Sanderson to murder him?"

"That's exactly what I mean to say, an' it's what I am sayin'."

"What did Sanderson do to infuriate everybody?"

"Why, ever' man on that jury is a cattleman, an' ol' man Jake was what we call a 'open range man'. If any of us fellers fenced up our pastures, he'd cut our wires an' let his own cattle range on our lands. He's treated dang near

ever' man in La Belle like that from Doc Livermore an' ol' man Munro clear up to the Yankees that come in with the boom an' thought they could run things down here like they done up North, but ol' man Jake showed 'em they couldn't do it. No fences, that was his motto, an' he stuck by it till somebody paid a nigger to kill him."



POGGIOLI grunted as the oddness of the investigation dawned on him. He stood looking out the back door. It gave on an expanse of creeping palmettos. The bayonet shaped leaves bristled as high as a man's chest. Then he observed some tracks in the sand under the door. The prints were of hobnailed shoes and larger shoes with broken soles. The toes of these tracks were pressed deep in the ground while the heels scarcely touched the sand.

Poggioli called the deputy's attention to them.

"Have any of the jurymen come out the back door since the inquest began?" he inquired.

"Why, no-o, I don't reckon they have," said Sawyer. "One of 'em had to go across the street to the garage."

"M-m! Has the crowd out in front there been milling around this end of the store?"

"No; these scrub palmettos ain't a comfortable place to mill in. What are you askin' about that for?"

"I was just wondering if those tracks there were made by Slewfoot and Labby?"

"Oh, shore, they're bound to be. That busted shoe is a nigger track, an' you know no nigger ain't been around here since ol' man Jake was killed. Yes, I noticed 'em there when I closed the door on the jury, an' I thought about layin' boards over 'em to preserve 'em for the criminal trial, then I thought ag'in, 'Now they's no use in that. If you jest almost see one man shoot another 'n with your own eyes, you don't have to go aroun' identifyin' his tracks.'"

Poggioli nodded slowly and grunted again.

"Yes—I see."

The footprints visualized for the psychologist the two cowhands tiptoeing silently away from the store into the palmettos. But there was something about the picture in contradiction to the deputy's theory of the crime. The scientist was thinking about this as he turned and went back to the jury.

When he stood before the group again he saw one of the men with a chisel, about to cut the bullet out of the wall.

Suddenly the position of the corpse impressed itself on Poggioli. It lay quite near the counter, directly across from the bullet hole. A possible defense struck him and he called out to the chiseler:

"Wait just a moment. Give me half a second before you dig out that bullet."

He drew a match from his pocket, walked across and thrust it into the hole.

"Gentlemen," he said to the group, "this match stick is pointing in the direction from which the bullet came; straight across the dead man. But Mr. Sanderson is lying almost against the counter. The murderer, therefore, stood just behind the counter to fire that shot; do you agree to this?"

The jury assented, after a moment, by grunting and nodding.

"Very well; now you men know negroes. You have hired them, worked with them, been with them all your lives. Now I ask you as a group, did any man here ever see a negro behind any counter in any store in La Belle?"

"I—I never did," drawled the foreman, looking around among the others.

"Neither did I," put in two or three more.

"None of you ever did. Negroes don't walk behind white men's counters. They have been accused of stealing too many times when they were innocent for them to take a chance of being seen behind a white man's counter. Besides, there

was no reason for Slewfoot to go behind the counter to shoot Mr. Sanderson. There was every reason for him not to go. Behind the counter he would have attracted the old man's attention. And when it came to the actual shooting, he could have shot just as easily from in front of the counter. No, Slewfoot would never have walked behind the counter.

"With Finn Labby the conditions are exactly reversed. He was white. He had the white man's privilege to walk around for a bite of cheese. There's the cheese hoop. Once behind him, Finn could have shot his employer in the back of the head—where he *was* shot. This murder could have been a murder for anger, because Finn was high tempered. This view of the crime, gentlemen, removes suspicion from any other man in Hendry County, and I recommend it to your discretion. Return your verdict that Jake Sanderson was shot and killed by Finn Labby. It will be a widely acceptable solution to this crime. I thank you for your attention."

THIS speech created quite a stir among the jury. They glanced at one another with relief in their faces. The old negro woman began clapping her hands and praising the Lord and had to be hushed by the deputy. Then the officer came around to the psychologist.

"There's a lot to what you brought out, Mr. Poggioli," he said admiringly. "Of course a nigger wouldn't walk behind old man Munro's counter, an' of course Finn Labby would.

"Besides that, you send all these boys home with a clear conscience for each other. That was quite a stroke of yours."

"Thanks," said Poggioli.

The jurymen were standing up now, turning around and around after the manner of men who wish to retire for consultation, but who have no retiring place selected.

"Suppose me an' Mr. Poggioli an' Mr. Munro go out front an' leave you men in this end of the store to ballot on this thing," suggested the deputy.

The foreman agreed.

"An' you go along with 'em, Aunt Rose," he directed, "while we free your boy from this murder charge."

"Gemmen, I thanks you all. Oh, Lawd, I thanks you!"

"Yes, yes, that's all right—just go along with Mr. Sawyer."

Sawyer, the deputy, was beside the psychologist and was still in a congratulatory mood.

"By George, I would never have believed you could get a Florida jury to free a nigger of a murder charge jest by stickin' a match in a bullet hole."

The scientist pulled at his chin.

"I wish it were as clear to me as I made it to the jury."

"What do you mean?" asked the deputy, looking at him curiously.

"Those tracks at the back door, where the two cowhands came out—"

"Well, what about their tracks?"

"Why, they tiptoed away—both those boys went off on their tiptoes."

The deputy pondered a moment.

"Ain't that nachel, for 'em to go sneakin' away from their murder?"

"A man wouldn't try to tiptoe and keep quiet immediately after he had fired a pistol twice," said the psychologist.

"Well, now, that's a fact, too," admitted Sawyer, puzzled.

These observations were interrupted by a stir outside the door. Voices shouted out:

"Hey, Lang, got one of 'em, did ye?"

"Where'd you ketch him, Lang?"

"Slewfoot, what ye let the sheriff git ye for?"

A negro's voice blubbered out. The crowd outside the door parted and a wool shirted man entered, leading a handcuffed negro.

When Sawyer, the deputy, recognized the negro he shouted back to the jury to hold their decision as more evidence had been brought in. Old Aunt Rose

looked at her son and wailed out—

"Lawd, Slewfoot, go an' git caught jess when Mas' Poggoli 'bout to sot you free!"

Slewfoot blinked at his old mother and said nothing. The jurymen who were standing now went back to their seats. The sheriff brought his prisoner before them and the foreman motioned the black man to sit on a nail keg.

"Sheriff," asked the foreman, "did Slewfoot have a gun on him when you caught him?"

"Oh, yes—" the officer nodded, "here it is." And he drew from his pocket an ancient single action Colt revolver.

The spokesman took the weapon, turned it in his hand.

"Smith," he said, "better finish up your work chiselin' out that bullet. You've got yours, have you, Dr. Livermore?"

The surgeon indicated a pellet of lead lying on a piece of wrapping paper on the counter.

"Now, Slewfoot," said the foreman, "we want you to tell us exactly how old man Sanderson was shot an' who did it. No use in your tryin' to lie about it. If you did it, say so; if you didn't do it, tell us who did."

THE black man became very frightened. He wet his lips with his tongue and stammered:

"W-wuw-well, Mistuh Tim, Ah di'n' do hit. Ah sho di'n' do hit!"

"Then who did?"

"Ah—Ah don' know."

"Wasn't you in the store here when he was shot?"

"Yessuh, Ah guess Ah was."

"An' you say you don't know who shot him?"

"N-n-no, suh, Ah don' know who shot him. Ah—Ah di'n' see nobody shoot him."

"Hand me that bullet, Smith, soon as you get it out," directed the spokesman, "an' let me have that one on the counter now."

The chiseler presently brought his bit of lead and handed it in. The foreman compared the two bullets with the revolver.

"Well, gentlemen, there you are," he said to the other jurors. "Two old style .38 balls shot out of this .38 Colt." He swung the cylinder of the revolver to one side and added, "Here are a couple of exploded shells in his gun. The damn fool didn't even have brains enough to reload."

"Well, that ends the investigation," said one of the jurors.

"I think so," agreed the foreman.

At the sudden and simple turn of the evidence the old negro woman began weeping and praying the Lord to save Slewfoot.

The psychologist called out above the stir—

"Wait, gentlemen—wait just a moment before returning a final verdict."

One of the jurors was impatient.

"Thunder! What more do you want? Here's the bullets that done the work exactly fittin' the nigger's gun."

"Still, I'm here representing the prisoner, in a way. At least let me have opportunity to look over the evidence."

"Are you still thinkin' about the shot from behind the counter?" asked the foreman.

"I am; I am also thinking about Slewfoot's tracks just outside the back door. He didn't leap out as a man running away from a murder. His heels did not hit at all. He tiptoed away from the door. He was evidently under some sort of restraint."

"Restraint!" ejaculated a voice, and gave an incredulous laugh.

"Exactly; restraint—some sort of restraint."

The psychologist took up the two cones of lead and began examining them.

"I think this is a plumb waste of time," complained a juryman.

To this Mr. Poggioli made no reply, but continued examining the two missiles that had been recovered. Finally he came to a pause, frowning in con-

centration over the pieces of lead. His expression caught the attention of the whole group.

"Now what in the hell d'ye reckon he sees in them two bullets?" asked a juror querulously.

The psychologist glanced up and answered for himself—

"One of the most intriguing mysteries it has ever been my good fortune to encounter," he replied gravely.

The foreman arose from his chair.

"What is it, Mr. Poggioli?" he asked curiously.

"These bullets. The one that struck the wall and the one that hit Mr. Sanderson—which one do you gentlemen think was fired first?"

"Why, the one that hit the wall, of course—he missed him."

"On the contrary, it was fired last. The bullet from the body has reddish rust in its old fashioned lead grooves, but the one out of the wall is fouled with the black residue of smoke powder."

The coroner's jury looked at him in silence. Finally one of them said—

"Well, what do you make of that?"

"I make this of it: The man who killed Mr. Sanderson first shot him down, and then for some reason or other stood over his dead body and fired a bullet into the wall."

"Why, he may have shot at him twict and jest missed the second shot," suggested the foreman.

"Impossible; Sanderson was shot in the back of the head. Death was instantaneous. He dropped like a beef. This old pistol is a single action gun. The murderer had to recock his weapon, then he pointed it again and deliberately fired a bullet into the wall with his victim lying at his feet."

"What in the thunder did he do that for?" demanded the foreman.

Poggioli drew a long breath.

"Gentlemen, there could have been but one reason. The murderer wanted the bullet to be cut out and identified. He was afraid the ball in Sanderson's body would not be found, so he fired another into the wall. He had thought out his whole plan of action before he fired a shot."

"What would Slewfoot want to have his own gun identified for?" demanded a juror.

"Slewfoot didn't do the shootin'. Such a plot was far over his head. The murderer gave Slewfoot this revolver after he had killed old man Jake. He had plotted to give it to Slewfoot; that was why he was so anxious to have the gun in Slewfoot's possession identified. He thought it would save his own neck."

At this the foreman of the jury got hastily to his feet.

"Here! Here!" he cried. "This way of savin' a nigger, first by stickin' a match in a bullet hole, an' then by punchin' a pin in the grooves of two bullets—they ain't no sense to that!"

"No!"

"No, they ain't!" cried two or three voices.

Poggioli was about to protest this logical outrage when the spokesman of the jury nodded at him:

"Wait a minute, boys," he called. "Let me an' Mr. Poggioli have a word about this."

The session again had fallen into disorder. The foreman led the way to the back door. Poggioli followed him, wondering what would come next. When they were outside the door on the sand, the excited man asked in an undertone—

"Looky here, mister, do you know which one of us shot old man Jake?"

"Why, certainly," said the scientist.

"Well, which one of us— No, no— don't tell me! I don't want to be goin' aroun' knowin'— Yes, damn it, do tell me! I'd jest like to know the man that could think quick enough to bang another bullet into the wall."

"He didn't think that quickly," returned the psychologist. "He had been studying out that plan for over six months—ever since he clipped that article on ballistics out of some Sunday paper."

The foreman stood staring blankly at his companion.

"I'll be derned," he whispered. "Old man Munro!"

"Certainly. He had been holding a grudge against Sanderson ever since old Jake ran him out of the cattle businesss twenty years ago. He read this article on ballistics and made up a plan to murder Sanderson and place the blame on a negro.

"His chance came. He shot his enemy and then told the negro he would shoot him if he ever told it. Then he paid the negro his pistol and all the cash in his cash drawer to leave the country. That is why he couldn't change a dollar bill for that woman awhile ago. It also explains why these tracks here show two men tiptoeing away from the store and not running. They stole away with old man Munro whispering instructions."

The foreman stood shaking his head.

"I jest be danged," he said slowly. "You said a fellow couldn't cover up his tracks without makin' a lot more—" He thrust his head inside the door and called out, "Oh, Sheriff, has that nigger Slewfoot got any money on him?"

The officer called back:

"Yes, he's got a pocketful of small change. I thought it was cartridges when I first searched him, but it turned out to be nickles an' dimes."

"Well, then," called the foreman, "we'll have to turn Slewfoot loose, because you know he wouldn't have shot old man Jake for some money when he already had a pocketful." He looked at Poggioli and winked. "You see, I'm a pretty good reasoner myse'f, when I git started."

"What are you going to do about old man Munro?" inquired the psychologist.

"Why-y—er—nothin', I reckon. A jury of cattlemen like us ain't goin' to give old man Munro any trouble for killin' a skunk like old man Jake Sanderson. We'll return a verdict that he died at the hands of unknown parties for well known reasons. You see, out here on the Floridy prairies the law has its limits, an' old man Jake was one of them."

He gave the wink of a rustic who feels he has said something clever before a city man.

The FRIENDSHIP OATH

By T. SAMSON MILLER

Hold a true friend with both thy hands.
—KANURI PROVERB

THE street of sand, the clay houses streaked white with the droppings of the buzzard scavengers, the kneeling burnoused figures at sunrise prayers on the flat roofs, the open air butchery, primitive smithery, the vats of the indigo dyer, the dromedaries of the salt trader from the Niger—Boyd made a last visual memory of it all.

His mount walked beside the prancing steed of Kolo Saed, a white stallion whose speed was such that the shadow was left behind, if the troubadours who chanted in the marketplaces of Bornu of the mighty deeds of Kolo Saed, Emir of El Burka, were to be believed. All white was Emir Kolo—white horse, white burnous and white turban, a fold of the latter wound across the lower part of his face, after the Kanuri way of filtering the breathing of the blown sands of the harmattans, so that all Boyd saw of his princely escort were a pair of flashing eyes, the bridge of a black nose and a pair of black hands.

Boyd understood that the great honor done him in this escort was as politic as it was friendly. He mused on the strange twist in things by which he, John Boynton Boyd, Ph.D, Yale, quietly engaged in a study of the racial descents of the tribes of the West African hinterland, had become entangled in one of the little dramas of British expan-

sion, which developed from the refusal of the late Emir Ali Saed to accept the British-Bornu Protectorate to which the other Kanuri chiefs had submitted.

An English political officer, realizing that nothing could be done with the old emir, had lured his first born, Osungu, to Zunguru, the government seat of Northern Nigeria, and thence the heir-apparent had been talked into taking a trip to England. While Osungu was acquiring an intimidating awe of the might of the British Empire, old Ali Saed was taken with his last sickness and, wrapping his face in his burnous, that none might witness his death throes, spoke the last majestic words of a Kanuri—

"I pay my debt to Allah."

Osungu had been rushed back from England, but had dared no nearer El Burka than the protecting wing of the residency, a full day's ride north on the Zunguru trail. Kolo, a younger brother, had occupied the sheepskin, the emblematic throne of an emir.

Resident Lange had proclaimed Kolo a rebel and usurper, which made it awkward for Boyd, for Fred Lange was his friend and Kolo was his friend, and Boyd surmised that this escort was a political move; that when they came to the parting at the town wall Kolo was going to suggest that a friend might do a friend a service with his other friend. That, in fact, Boyd would present to the resident Kolo's side of it.

The surmise proved correct. Dismounting in the arch of the wall that gave on to the Zunguru trail, under the spiked head of the Lowan of Jeppa, who had trafficked with the whites, Kolo dropped the turban fold from his mouth and spoke in a rich bass:

"O friend, thou hast seen my people. What hast thou seen?"

Boyd knew the right answer, the expected answer—

"A people strong in their traditions, their pride of race, their faith in Allah."

The black eyes under the white turban sparkled, the resonant bass of Emir Kolo Saed thundered:

"Then say to the resident what thou hast seen; and say what I have seen of white man's rule. Say to the resident that whites shall rule in El Burka when fowls cut their teeth."

Boyd sucked in a slow breath, speechless before an heroic patriotism which he felt was hopeless. Anyway, they had talked it all out time and again—Kolo's journey through Nigeria to the Gold Coast, to see for himself the workings of white man's rule, and what he saw—tribeless, shiftless, geegaw'd blacks aping white man's dress, speech and ways. Returning to El Burka, he had made oath to Allah to keep out the whites and preserve his people to their traditions, their war exercises, their native values. Boyd's sympathy was warmed by an example right before his eyes of the spoilation which Kolo feared.

A group of water girls came from the town. Bow backs, native shawls wound under buoyant breasts, bare feet waltzing over the ground, heads erect on full necks balancing clay urns decorated with native art, the girls floated by with singing voices and rhythmic click of ivory anklets and wristlets.

Boyd visualized all that grace and symmetry and barbaric health hideously transformed by the exploitation of whites into a picture of impertinent slatterns in dragging skirts and rakish millinery, their bodies pulled awry by kerosene cans slopping water, and reeking of cheap pomades and hair oils, decked out in Birmingham trinkets, their feet pinched in button boots.

"The talking drums—" the resonant bass was booming again— "say Osungu hath dwelling with the resident; say he hath the dress of whites and the turban of the faithful." Kolo spat on the ground and bayed proverbially, "A dog hath four legs, yet it can not walk in two paths."

He bent and traced with a forefinger in the sand, O-S-U-N-G-U. A *mahdi**

*Holy man.

mixed spittle with the blood of a black hen and sprinkled it on the name.

Boyd was fretted by a sense of the futility of such voodoo measures in helping Kolo out of his dilemma. Then he found his hands taken by the emir and guided to a Koran, while the bass voice intoned with deep satisfaction:

"We sleep behind the Koran." (We have sworn friendship on the Koran and sleep without fear of treachery.)

If Kolo hadn't been Kolo, Boyd might have clapped him on the back and said:

"I'm sold on your idea. I'd like to help you. But Fred Lange gets his orders from Zunguru, and Zunguru from London, and London says you're a rebel and have got to go. But if there's a thing I can do with the resident, you can count on me."

But the heavy dignity of the Kanuri language did not lend itself to light sayings, and with a feeling that there was nothing he could do or say, Boyd contented himself with giving the Kanuri salute—touches of the right hand to the forehead and over the heart—and mounted and put his horse at a canter.

THE physical discomforts of a tortuous trail, a brassy sun scorching through the "smokes" of the harmattan and a smothering kerchief over the mouth were unfavorable to mental exertion. Boyd was without a glimmer of an idea as to how he could further Kolo's cause with Fred Lange when, at sundown, he drew rein before a huddle of flat roofs behind a high clay wall that rose isolated from a grassy plain. The wall was as solid as a blockhouse, for the invading Arab slavers of old built four-square and strong the disciplinary houses for fresh captives along the slave route to Timbuktu.

A private of House Mounted Infantry on sentry duty called an orderly to take Boyd's mount to stables outside the wall. Boyd entered the yard. He grinned to an African lolling in a deck-chair in the doorless entrance of one of the cellar-above-ground clay houses that faced the yard—a blackest black African with the aquiline features of a Kanuri, dressed in plusfour knickers, checked hose, carpet slippers, blazer jacket and the mandatory turban of a Bornu Mahomedan. It was Osungu.

Resisting a temptation to sing out to Osungu Kolo's proverb—anent a dog with four legs walking in two paths—Boyd crossed the yard to an entrance draped by a mosquito net, beside which sat an old troubadour. Small black eyes in a cinder of a face lifted to Boyd a searching look and met a twinkle of affectionate derision.

Three weeks previous, before Boyd had left there for El Burka, the minstrel had laid siege to the adamant heart of the resident with chants of his hero, Kolo Saed, sung to the accompaniment of a *gilau*—a half-gourd with two strings, the bowl covered with scraped sheepskin and with dried seeds inside. When the chant was of Kolo's wisdom in sunrise court under the baobab that was El Burka's town hall and courthouse, a gentle rocking of the seed produced the lisp of the foliage in the wind, the murmurs of approval of the court.

If the cracked croon was of Kolo's courage in battle, the minstrel tapped stiff fingers on the taut sheepskin and one heard the thudding hoofs of Kolo's famous charger, the thunder of war drums, and the strings and seeds gave forth the mingled sounds of battle—sword against sword, cries, the jingle of bits and stirrups.

All of which was good enough "frightfulness" for the courtyards of enemy chiefs, but poor stuff to scare the representative of his Britannic Majesty.

Boyd lifted the mosquito net and entered the resident's personal quarters. A big, blond, pink faced man with a straight stemmed briar jutting from his mouth raised a blue gaze from specimens of tropic beetles. Fred Lange—Frederick Ponsonby Maltby Lange—

looked young for the major's crowns on the shoulder straps of his smart drill uniform, younger still for the important post of resident. But the inducements for service in unhealthy West Africa are higher rank and pay pro tem, and opportunities in the way of administrative jobs of a semi-military nature.

"Well, Jack, what luck?" Fred Lange inquired in a pleasant baritone drawl.

"In paleontology? I've gathered a store of Kanuri lore and legend."

"You know that's not what I mean."

Boyd grinned. When he had left for El Burka he had announced a determination to find out why Zunguru was so anxious to fly the British flag over El Burka, and why they didn't make short work of Kolo with machine guns and bombing planes, and if Kolo had an ace or two in the hole.

"Well, sit down." Lange pushed toward Boyd a calabash bowl with an assortment of pipes. "What did you find out?"

Boyd gave a lot of time to choosing a pipe, then said:

"Fred, I'm your guest. I've drunk your whisky, smoked your pipes. We've pulled each other through fever."

"You sound like bad news," Lange interposed. "What's the trouble, Jack?"

Boyd longed to continue as he had started, frankly, as between close friends; imagined himself saying, "I turned up a lot that won't make pleasant hearing, Fred. You're the catspaw for the dirty steal of a gang of London money kings. There are rich surface deposits of tin in El Burka. Kolo's got to go because he won't let in the whites to exploit the tinfields." Boyd imagined himself saying that, and telling of Kolo's dread of the hybrid civilization that ensues upon the exploitation of natives by whites. But what was the use? Fred Lange would say he was not responsible for the policy of the British Colonial Office.

Boyd succumbed to a discouraging view that nothing he could say would help Kolo. Then Lange, knitting his brows over Boyd's troubled silence, tossed in a remark that let through a dazzling light of hope for Kolo:

"Zunguru sent me a sharp call-down for permitting you to visit the rebel. You see, if Kolo granted you an American concession—"

"It would block the London grabbers," Boyd cut in, startled.

Why hadn't he thought of that? An American concession. Nations back up the foreign interests of their citizens. Washington would be behind any American concession granted by Kolo, and that might even mean Washington's support of Kolo's emirship. Boyd could kick himself for not having thought of that in El Burka. Was it too late? He cogitated possibilities, probabilities, until there was born the germ of a plan.

"Fred, why not ask Kolo to come in and palaver?" he suggested.

"I did that. We would rather see a strong and popular emir on the sheepskin than this knickered misfit. I asked him to come and talk things over."

"Well?"

Lange chortled.

"The messenger was lucky to come off with his ears. Kolo caught my message in his hands as the messenger gave it, threw it on the ground and spat on it. A chip of the old Ali Saed block."

Boyd suggested that Kolo would come in on his invitation.

"We sleep behind the Koran," he added.

"The sacred friendship oath!" Lange's eyes widened. "You must have made a great hit with the young ruffian, Jack."

"He plastered friendship on me as thick as a politician seeking favors." Boyd laughed, the plan forming in his mind evidently calling for the creation of an impression that he was not enthusiastic about Kolo and his claims. "The rascal hoped I'd put in a good word for him with you."

"I was afraid the rebel would pull the wool over your eyes." The major's tone

carried relief. "The way you fell for the minstrel's hero stuff gave me to think you regarded Kolo as the victim of British imperialism. Well?" he prompted. "Suppose he comes? He'll refuse flatly to discuss coming into the Protectorate."

"His refusal gives you a chance to refer the palaver to Zunguru."

"The rebel won't trust his neck there."

"An emir is entitled to a guard—" Boyd dropped a pause full of meaning—"of honor."

Lange frowned.

"You mean—good Lord, man!—you'd trick him here under the friendship oath and clap him under guard and pack him off to Zunguru."

Boyd put on the best face he could before the censure, relieved, anyway, to note that the major did not suspect any hidden motive in his, Boyd's, willingness to make treacherous use of the friendship oath. It was a point gained for the plan. At risk of further besmirching of himself he put forth an argument for the plan.

"It looks dirty, I'll admit. But look at the facts: Kolo's doomed anyway. Nor does he come off so badly in the deal. As a British pensioner with comfortable quarters on the Gold Coast, and other reactionary chiefs for company, he'll be better off than as a dead hero."

"Jack," Lange returned icily, "we'd never see your proposition eye to eye. Please forget it."

BOYD let it rest at that, for the time being. Lange's initial shock and rejection of the proposition was only to be expected. Boyd had not exhausted the argument. Later, pushing their chairs back after dinner, Boyd broke a strained silence with:

"At least nothing's lost by getting Kolo here. What happens after is my picnic. You can stay out of it, Fred. The plan offers the only peaceful solution."

"Peaceful?" Lange ejaculated. "The ruffian would come with an escort. When they learn that Kolo has been sent under guard to Zunguru, they'll raise hell. The drums will beat the story over all Bornu."

"The escort won't know."

"Eh?" gulped Lange, his curiosity trapped in spite of himself.

"I've figured this out pretty close, Fred. You flew off the handle before I had a chance to explain. I see a way of not only getting Kolo out of the emiralty but of getting Osungu in, and without fuss. The brothers are about the same figure. If Osungu puts on a white burnous and winds a fold of his turban across his face—see?"

"You mean you'd have Osungu present himself to the escort as Kolo?"

"Exactly. Dressed like Kolo and mounted on Kolo's charger. It's a cinch."

Boyd rushed the argument, giving Lange no time to develop suspicions of a nigger in the woodpile of his, Boyd's, willingness to play villain.

"True, the trick will be exposed at El Burka, but Osungu will then be in the emiralty. He'll give out that Kolo recognized his claim to the sheepskin."

Boyd piled argument on argument, uncertain whether he was making any headway. Lange sat there, the smoke from his pipe shadowing his handsome face, his expression giving no clue as to what he might be thinking, till presently he sent a look in the direction of a photo of a young woman on the wall. The look gave a clue to his cogitations. In the intimacy that knits two men isolated in an outpost, in the confidences of the long and lonely nights and the fever that breaks down reserves, Boyd had learned that Fred Lange had left his bride of a month to better his fortunes in West Africa.

Captain Lange, home on furlough—his military life had been spent on far flung frontiers—had met and won Katherine Burton in a whirlwind courtship. He found he had married into a

family whose members were in prosperous ways in professions and businesses.

"I'd be a dub at money making, Jack," he had drawled to Boyd, explaining how he came to tackle the resident's job. "But it was a bit hard on Kit, having to get along on a captain's pay. If I make good in this El Burka affair, it'll be a feather in my cap; it'll put me in line for a governorship. Not that I care about that sort of thing, but Kit would be the wife of his Excellency and that'll make it easier for her with her brothers' wives."

All this was recalled to Boyd by the major's look at the photo, and he was exploring it, as a likely factor in influencing Lange's consent to the plan, when a runner arrived with two letters whose contents could not but be goads to the major's scruples. Zunguru wrote cryptically for a report on progress in the El Burka matter, and the other letter was from Sydney Burton, Kitty's brother, a company promoter.

Lange ground his teeth into his pipestem as he read Burton's letter, then tossed it to Boyd with a savage laugh. The latter did some teeth gritting on his own account over sentences that carried pokes and digs at the major . . .

> Get next to yourself, Fred. According to your last to Katherine, you have the heir to the emirship of El Burka right where you can do yourself and Katherine a good turn. Now, old man, take your mind off beetles, bugles and drills and tobacco and hear Opportunity knocking. Here's the data on El Burka, if so you don't happen to know. You wouldn't.
>
> There's tin there, oodles of it, right on the surface. Tin sells around a pound the ton. The tin mines of Cornwall are a mile deep in the ground—expensive pumping, hauling, drilling, blasting, union labor, strikes and whatnot. Yet they are profitable. The El Burka tin is a free alluvial deposit on the surface, and there's cheap native labor. They've picked you for the chap to pull the chestnut. You'll get a D.S.O. ribbon for your chest, and certain wise ones at home will cut their coupons.
>
> Take it from one who knows, Fred; furs, cars, the London and Ascot seasons, gowns and such go a lot farther in matrimony than a chest decoration. Here's your big chance. Plant that nigger in the emirship and get from him a concession for us. I'll find the capital. As a matter of fact, it'll take very little, only enough to pay cheap native labor for a couple of months and the freight on the first shipment.

Boyd had a vicious wish that he could plant the writer in El Burka and have him call a Kanuri a nigger to his face; a Kanuri whose boast is that there is no negroid strain in his race. All the same, the letter and the Zunguru note were valuable to his argument for the plan.

"What between Zunguru and in-laws and Kolo, you're in a bad pickle, Fred—if you'll excuse frank speaking. You can't go after Kolo in a soldier's way—machine guns against swords and spears and suicidal courage. Kolo threatens a holy war that might be the spark to the Mohamedan powder keg England sits on. Allowing that the threat is largely bluff, it hardly jibes with the pathetic hope in his sending that minstrel to convert you. Zunguru daren't take chances on the home radicals raising a cry of a capitalists' war for tin. It's got to be a quiet steal or no steal at all."

"You've posted yourself on the situation very thoroughly, Boyd," Lange commented dryly.

Boyd passed that up, driving at the main thing.

"I see no way out but to get Kolo here. You can leave the arrangements to me. Place at my disposal a Housa sergeant and two privates for Kolo's escort, or guard. I'll handle the whole thing."

He went on and on:

"Zunguru picked you for the goat, if things go wrong. You're a soldier, Fred; you're not cut out for this sort of thing. Sydney Burton is right; you'll pull the chestnut for the London grabbers. He's right, too, about wives loving success . . ."

He kept at this man, long after the Housa and houseboys had taken to their sleeping mats, without other encourage-

ment than could be deduced from signs of an irritation in Lange of defenselessness against convincing persuasions.

As it chanced, the decision flashed out unpremeditated on the heels of a remark Lange thrust into Boyd's arguments—

"You're giving yourself a lot of trouble—on my account, or Kolo's, or whose?"

He rose, his blond head towering against the punkah. He knocked the ashes from his pipe by beating the bowl against his left palm with savage energy.

"All right," he barked. "Get Kolo here."

Boyd gave him no time to reconsider his irritable consent. A Housa was dispatched to a village down the El Burka trail, an hour's ride from the residency, to have the talking drums there send out the invitation, which would be relayed from village to village to El Burka. Also the Housa was instructed to buy a white burnous and a pair of riding boots of red sheepskin, such as Kolo wore. The Housa was back at daybreak with a message that Kolo was taking the trail after sunrise court. The Housa handed Boyd a burnous and boots, which the latter took to one of the buildings known as the guest house.

IF KOLO took the trail after sunrise court he would be arriving about sundown. There were times during the slow crawl of the burning sun across the harmattan's murk when Boyd sought to lighten the strain by inviting a humorous perspective of John Boynton Boyd, Ph.D, snared in plots and hazards to help out a young ruffian with a nasty habit of spiking the heads of enemies on the town wall. But mostly he was occupied with the details of the plot, and with keeping guard over Lange's scruples, sweeping away objections as they arose and allaying any suspicion that the plan was not all he made it appear to be.

He had an anxious moment on that last score. He was with Osungu about sundown, coaching the knickered misfit in the part he was to play in the plot—supposedly. The walled yard had peculiar acoustic qualities that made his talk audible to Fred Lange, who had gone to the flat roof of his quarters to watch the El Burka trail.

"It won't be all beer and skittles for you in El Burka, Osungu," Lange heard Boyd say. "For one thing, you'll have to give up this comfortable deckchair for a sheepskin on the hard ground, give up your golf clubs for the sword. Too, an emir supported by whites isn't going to be popular in El Burka, and unpopular emirs have a way of meeting sudden, painful and mysterious deaths. I don't want to scare you; but I think you ought to know what you're going up against. Fact is, Kolo gets the best of the deal; he'll have a British pension, pleasant quarters by the cool ocean, no sunrise courts, no worry, no fear of poisoned food. He'll have his wives and attendants and he'll play golf and cricket with whites. On the other hand, you—"

At this point Lange bawled down to know the idea of putting Osungu in a funk of the emirship. Boyd had an anxious moment. If Lange pursued the inquiry it might lead to suspicion of a trick within a trick. Luckily the resident was distracted just then by distant drumming, easily distinguished as that of a mounted drummer beating a gallop. Boyd dropped low, hurried words to Osungu:

"Your life in El Burka won't be worth a tinker's dam. They worship Kolo. Hear that drumming? That's Kolo now. When he gets here I'll take him to the guest house. I'll call you over. When you come, do as I tell you and you'll come out all right."

He quickly crossed the yard to Lange's quarters and took a flight of steps cut in the clay wall to the roof.

Lange stood at the parapet, his gaze fixed on a movement in the harmattan murk down the El Burka trail. Out of the murk, from which the fiery paint-

ings of sundown were fast fading into the quick tropic night, swirled a jumble of billowy burnouses, turbans, flying manes and tails, red boots, saddle cloths of leopard skins. Impetuously in the lead was a white figure on a white horse. There was no flash of weapons. Kolo was riding "open palms"—unarmed—according to the honorable tradition of friendly palaver.

Lange gave no sign of awareness of Boyd's presence. Arms stiff at his sides, the clenched hands, rigid body, revealed the inward struggle between the forces that had driven him into his present position and the prickings of conscience at the sight of young Kolo riding in confidence in the friendship oath to his doom.

"Take it easy, Fred," advised Boyd, fearful of a last minute backing out, to the utter loss of all for which he had worked.

"Damn you, Boyd!" exploded Lange. "You can't part a Kanuri from his horse."

"It can't be helped, Fred."

"Mount that knickered slob on Kolo's favorite charger," groaned Lange.

"Fred, just leave the arrangements to me."

"Boyd, you must be a rotter, or—" a pause— "you have something up your sleeve. What was your idea in scaring Osungu?" he demanded suspiciously. "Americans," he lamented, "say and look one thing and mean the opposite."

Boyd had to use all the will he owned to keep from shouting:

"I'm trying to help you out and help Kolo. Use your wits. If you think I'd turn Kolo over to the Zunguru crowd, if you think I'd trick him through our friendship oath, you're crazy. You are muddled and blinded by the jam you're in—the jibes of your wife's people, the hectorings of Zunguru, and a notion that the love of Kitty hangs on your success or your failure in this job."

Thus the words in Boyd's mind. In actual speech, however, he was persuasive; said he was going down to receive Kolo, and he begged Lange not to fly off the handle, whatever happened, but to trust him.

In the yard, dark in the shadow of its high walls, a Housa sergeant and two privates, armed, awaited orders. Boyd gave simple instructions.

"Sergeant, you and your men mount and wait at the stables. Have a spare mount saddled. Have Kolo's horse taken to the stables. After the emir enters the yard you will ride to the exit and await my call. Then come with one of your men to the guest house. You will receive a prisoner to deliver to Zunguru."

The sergeant started to salute, remembered that Boyd was a civilian, made a military about-face and went to the stables.

Shortly after Kolo's party thudded up and flung their mounts on their haunches with a showy horsemanship.

Again he experienced one of those moments of stressed uncertainty that were constantly bobbing up in this strange business which he had taken upon himself. Would the riders wait grimly at the exit, or pile into the yard at the heels of their hero, suspicious of walls and Housa rifles and the intentions of the resident? Or would Kolo make the magnificent gesture of complete confidence in the friendship oath, as Boyd counted on, and order his men to retire to the village down the trail during the palaver. That was the Kanuri custom in friendly palaver. In fact, the resident should have gone forth alone and met Kolo alone on the trail, and sat there, the two of them, and talked things over.

Boyd banked on this custom guiding the emir. And so it proved. The escort evidently had its orders beforehand. A deep voice bayed—

"Allah go with thee, O Emir."

Then there was a wheeling of mounts and a receding thunder of hoofs.

Kolo dismounted and entered the yard, a regal figure caught in a lane of light from the mosquito net. His black

eyes glowed at Boyd between turban folds, his deep bass bayed—

"Hold a true friend with both thy hands."

A feeling of satisfaction and gratitude in the tone suggested an assurance in Boyd that put the latter in a flurry of apprehension. Had it been other than Kolo he might have said, "See here, old man, don't get off with a notion that the game is won. I'm taking all kinds of chances. If the thing goes over, O. K. If not, it's going to be hell all round."

But again, as it had been at their parting under the spiked head of the Lowan of Jeppa, the Kanuri tongue proved inadequate. The best Boyd could do by way of cautioning against overconfidence was to quote a fatalistic Kanuri proverb—

"As to what is future, even a bird with a long neck can not see it, but Allah only."

His feeling at the moment was out-and-out fatalistic. He was never for an instant free from a lively anxiety that Lange would blow up and call the thing off.

He heard Lange fling down from the roof with a stamp on the clay steps that revealed an intense dissatisfaction and goaded conscience, which was now put to further strain by sounds of Kolo's charger being taken to the stables—the parting of Kolo and his horse, the saddest bereavement of a Kanuri—then the jingle of the accouterments of the Housa guard walking their mounts from the stables to the exit. The sounds must have been as harrowing to Lange as the preparations of a hangman.

Realizing that all this put a strain on Lange that might cause him to break at any moment, Boyd got Kolo to the guest house without loss of time. There their voices mingled in Kanuri, cautiously low. An understanding was arrived at. Then Boyd signaled across the yard to Osungu to come, waving to him to avoid the lane of light from the net, lest Fred Lange see him and scent in this bringing together of the brothers something suspicious. A few minutes later he called the sergeant, who crossed the yard with a private.

THE crucial moment was come. Would Lange hold out against the stab to his tortured conscience of the quick military steps of the guard and a wincing expectation of raging Kanuri curses on the perfidy of dogs of swine eating whites? Boyd decided to take no chances. He went to the major's quarters and blocked himself just within the net.

"It's all right, Fred." He affected a cheerful matter-of-factness. "We win."

Lange said nothing. He stood there, quiet, immobile, a tortured gaze lost at some indefinite point in the air between himself and Boyd. The immobility did not fool Boyd; he saw through the external calm—the front of an Englishman with whom any display of emotion is taboo—the inward struggle, against which Boyd felt that anything he might say must appear futile. Still, he could not stand there dumb. He had to hold Lange, engage his mind. So, taking a cue from the photo on the wall, he sought to stiffen the Britisher:

"When one's married it's different. One owes it to the wife to give her all the social advantages and that sort of thing. One can't—" He was silenced by Lange's gaze suddenly fastened on him. Lange spoke, or rather there issued from his mouth with hardly any lip movement, a sepulchral reminder—

"We sleep behind the Koran."

Boyd gave a sickly grin. The only thing that kept him from clearing himself of the imputation there and then was a conviction that in a short while, if his plan did not miscarry, Lange would be wringing his hand.

The sepulchral reminder put an end to any further attempts at speech on Boyd's part. There ensued a grueling hiatus. Minutes were eons steeped with a quiet that swept in from the plains, bearing down and smothering. From

the night came the cackling yowl of a laughing hyena, the only sound in a vast and dark silence that isolated the drama. All the time Lange was listening to the yard and striving to make it appear that he was not listening.

It was nightmarish—incredible. Boyd's blocking position at the net, fraught as it was with a sense of helpless expectancy of the impending charge of a giant suddenly stung to action, perhaps by the steps of the Housa guard with their prisoner. It was incredible; it was absurd. Here was an officer and gentleman, in the truest sense of the term, wincingly nervous of sounds of a struggle and raging Kanuri curses that would stamp him an accessory in a treacherous trapping, yet held, chained by—what? Love of wife, and a sort of fixation in his dread of the patronizing attitude of in-laws to a soldier and amateur beetle collector; a fear that failure in this El Burka affair would set a hall stamp on that attitude.

Of a sudden the silence was shattered by quick steps on the packed clay of the yard, burned by years of sun to brick hardness. Strangely, there were no sounds of a struggle, no cursing.

Over his shoulder Boyd saw the sergeant and private, one on each side of a man muffled in a turban and dressed in a white burnous, cross the lane of light, the prisoner going with a strange docility. Lange saw the same over Boyd's head. Then came sounds of men mounting, then a tattoo of hoofs up the Zunguru trail.

That tattoo beat in Lange's brain and broke the meshes which Boyd had woven around him. The expected revolt came.

"I'm through!" Gone was the pleasant drawl, gone the calm. "I'm through!" Lange repeated. "Damn you, Boyd, I let you talk me into this." He drove at the net. "Out of my way!"

Boyd kept his position. His face broke out a relieved grin, which proved more efficacious in stopping Lange than any physical resistance Boyd could have offered. A grin at such a moment was arresting.

"You should grin!" roared Lange. "What are you grinning at?"

Boyd gave back a strange answer.

"I counted on this. I knew you wouldn't go through with it, Fred. I counted on this; and it makes it easier for what I have to say."

"What you have to say?" snapped Lange.

"It's all O.K, Fred. Kolo's right here, in the guest house."

"Kolo here? Then—"

"I swapped prisoners on you, Fred," Boyd said, and hurried on, holding Lange by the sheer wonder of his speech. "Osungu is babbling happily to the guard that he will have a British pension and a house by the ocean and will play golf and cricket with the whites. Fact is, he funked the emirship. In the guest house just now he resigned his claim in Kolo's favor."

Amazement, hurt, suspicion shadowed across Lange's face. Broken sentences dropped from him:

"My guest. Tricked by the man who —damn! A bugled and drilled sap. Kit's people were right. I'll be the laughing stock of Zunguru." Then with swift change, "Fool! I can ride after Osungu, get him back."

"Sure. But you won't," Boyd asserted with calm conviction. "I know you, Fred. I know you through and through, and I banked on what I know of you. You're not the man to pull a low trick."

"I don't get you." The blue eyes stabbed Boyd with suspicion, which gave rise to the next words. "Zunguru rapped me for permitting you, an American, to visit El Burka. I laughed at their fear that you were a smart Yankee concession hunter. I sponsored you."

"And you think, Fred, I have taken a dirty advantage of you," Boyd supplied.

"Think! You get a concession from Kolo and secure both him and your con-

cession by this trick, if I let it pass."

Boyd took the charges pleasantly.

"You yourself put the concession idea into my head when you said an American concession would block your own grabbers. That gave me the idea of getting Kolo here. I have just shown him how he can secure himself by granting me a concession."

"Fine," sneered Fred Lange. "You help yourself to the tin from a noble motive of aiding a patriot. How will your exploitation differ from any other exploitation?"

"There'll be no exploitation, Fred. The concession will never be used. We merely tie the hands of the London crowd."

"We—"

"Exactly." Boyd smiled. "I know you, Fred, and I banked on what I know of you. You'll not ride after Osungu. You loathe the idea of that knickered slob in the emiralty. You will receive Kolo, and after you have heard him tell of what he saw of Africans under the rule of whites, you'll be sold on his passion to preserve his people to their traditions and blood."

"You seem pretty confident, Jack," Lange mused, his gaze exploring Boyd with a sort of smiling wonder or relief.

"Hang it, Fred, you were for Kolo all along, only you didn't realize it. It has been part of my job to bring you to such a realization. I saw it when you called Kolo a chip of the old Ali Saed block. You were grinning as you said it. When you have had your talk with him, you'll be glad to recognize his emirship. There'll be no D.S.O—no rewards."

Boyd's eyes went to the photo on the wall.

"But Kitty will understand. Don't be fooled by that bright brother of hers. I'll wager Kitty fell in love with you because you were something different from her money making crowd. She knew who she was marrying, didn't she?"

The blue eyes under the blond brows smiled in a reminiscent way that suggested thoughts of that past courtship, and they laid thoughtful gaze on Boyd. Then they went to the calabash bowl of pipes. Fred Lange chose a briar with great deliberation, slowly packed the bowl and returned to Boyd a gaze that was free of the shadows of perplexity and anxiety that had haunted him of late. He struck a match, applied it to his pipe and spoke across the tiny flame—

"You have solved a problem for me, Jack."

Boyd said, softly—

"*Soba tiarebe musko ndin tei.*" Which in Kanuri means: "Hold a true friend with both your hands."

But a British resident does not favor displays of sentiment.

"Oh, well—" with a slight testiness—"get Kolo here, will you?"

TROPICAL LUMBERJACK

By CHARLES A. FREEMAN

THE white lumberjack is at his best in the Philippines whose vast forests give employment to many of his kind. He is usually a product of the American lumber camps who has drifted across the Pacific in search of adventure and higher wages, and he finds both, from the island of Basilan in the Celebes, to Camiguin off the northern coast of Luzon.

Usually the lumberjack is younger than the average old-timer of the Insurrection period, but there are few of the latter still on the job. Seldom, if ever, do they work for the lumber companies, preferring to get out timber on their own account and seeking some remote beach or river valley for the scene of their operations.

One such lumberjack has resided on desolate Camiguin island with his native wife for nine years, and is now preparing to return to the outside a comparatively wealthy man. During the war he became a "peso millionaire," but dropped his money in unwise speculation. Then with five hundred dollars' capital he struck out for the wilderness to win it back through the medium of timber.

Another lumberjack, cruising the forests of Leyte, stumbled on a lake of asphalt, and sold his find to a company guaranteeing him ten dollars a day for life. For a time he posed around the aristocratic Manila hotel, and wore a dinner jacket every evening. It was all very well for awhile, but overalls were more in accordance with his tastes and soon the city saw him no more. The jungle had swallowed him.

Strange as it may seem, there has never been an authentic case of an American being bitten by a poisonous snake in the Islands, and the jungles swarm with them. Pythons, however, often attack the lumberjacks, and in the lumber camps snake hides adorn the walls. Like the Filipino foresters, the white cruisers always pack a three-foot bolo in preference to a gun, and with it are usually able to hack loose encircling coils.

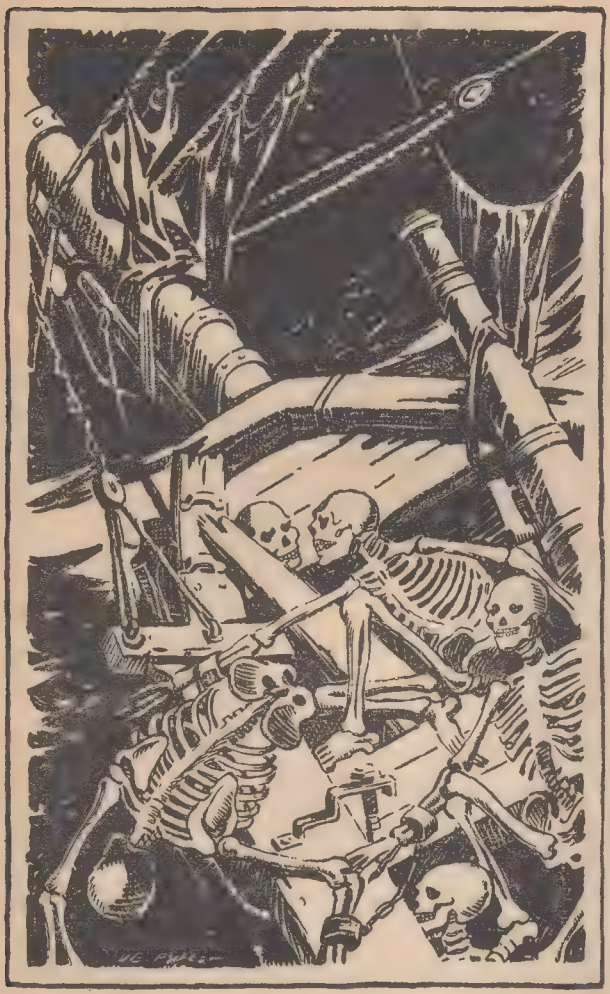
Those unversed in the life of the jungle often imagine that the tropical lumberjacks lead lonely lives, but this is far from being the case. The white men of the Philippine forests are there to stay, and they almost invariably annex a Filipino wife to accompany them on their wanderings and to make their crude shacks as homelike as possible. One swiftly learns the language of the other, and at night when the moon rises and the camp-fires raise their smudges of smoke to drive away mosquitoes, the husband describes the wonders of New York or Chicago to his better half, while she in turn initiates him into the mysteries of witchcraft, and the best way in which to defeat the wiles of the *tikbalang*, or tree fairy.

"Before eating fruit with a stranger," she advises him, "sniff the air for the scent of crushed bedbugs. If you smell it, beware, for the stranger is a *tikbalang* who may turn you into one of its kind."

But the sun bronzed *Americano* will only laugh.

"Gee, Maria," he says, "I'd like to find out how it feels to have a horse's head and legs like a grasshopper," and goes on to picture the glories of some gorgeous bar of the pre-Volstead era.

"And they actually gave food away?" questions the woman doubtfully. "Free lunch? Oh, Pedro, I am sure now that your countrymen are all crazy."



The Dead Ship

By

PIERRE MILLE

"THEY won't get by Pelée Island," Barnavaux said. "The tide's ebbing."

The little fishing smack, with her crew of five or six men, had been caught by the formidable gust which blew from the northwest and was unable to sail close to the wind to enter the main channel; she was trying to pass between Pelée Island and the mainland to get into the port of Cherbourg.

"As well undertake to sail on a paved road," Barnavaux went on as the wind increased in violence. "There's no more water." Then he cried out, "There she goes! They're aground!"

The craft had stopped suddenly, her nose in the mud, and the tempest, striking the russet sails, which no longer could move the stranded hull, tore them off, tossed them across the sky streaked with rain—rags which seemed to soar and float a long time before dropping into the treacherous sea.

"There's a man overboard," I said breathlessly.

"He's holding on to the mast, which snapped," Barnavaux resumed. "The others are still on deck. But the boat will be knocked to bits in thirty minutes. Then—"

He broke off. At a single word of command, the lifeboat, near the signal station, had cast off her hoisting gear. She was afloat already, with her six men and coxswain. Brown hands were clasped on the oars, stabbed by the spray, backs rounded under the yellow oilcloths. The boat progressed so smoothly that it seemed easy, as if any one might have achieved progress! I

started to shout, with enthusiasm and hope, with pride as well, for when one sees other men in a fine and courageous effort, there comes to all a sort of mistaken pride: One believes that one is acting!

"Eh! That's what I call maneuvering," Barnavaux said. "They didn't take two minutes to launch that boat!"

He was right. It had been difficult to cast off so rapidly, to take the water properly. But I had eyes only for that brave, light thing which bobbed over the waves, flattened at the crests as if the wind which had lifted them crushed them. The boat carried on, and on! The oars dipped into the water, like the limbs of an insect scuttling across a quiet pond. Then they remained motionless, while the man who had fallen overboard was picked up. A few seconds later the boat stopped a second time. She was taking the crew off the fishing smack. Saved! They were saved! The boat turned about, headed for Cherbourg. I clapped my hands. Barnavaux's clear eyes danced with joy on either side of his thin nose. But, as he is a simple soul, he said immediately:

"We must go and drink something at the Caveau des Dessalés, on the port. And when the chaps from the lifeboat come by, we'll invite them in. It was worth it!"

After Barnavaux had swallowed a tall glass of grog, made with Calvados alcohol, boiling water and lemon, spiced with cloves, he said:

"I saw another rescue, a long time ago. But those who were rescued were worse than phantoms.

"I remember. It has been more than ten years, but I remember. At that time I had gone on convalescent leave from the hospital at Mevatanane, in Madagascar, to Majunga. To find a place for me, it was decided that I should help Plevech, who was no more a sailor than I was, for he was a customs officer. Nevertheless, he had been ordered to watch for smuggled powder between Beravine and Maintirane. It is true that the Indian and Arab traders of Zanzibar came there from other parts of the world to peddle powder to the Sakalaves, but I'm telling you that I still wonder how Plevech could have prevented them, with his rotten old tub and his four native sailors recruited at Majunga.

"As for me, I represented the marines, the landing party, the whole armed force; and that was enough, as we never saw a foe. It was all an idea of the government, and one must never discuss the government's ideas.

"Oh! That was funny navigation! The wind was ahead all the time, because of the season. Plevech and I, we both knew, vaguely, that there was something called tacking, which was used to get sailing vessels on their way even with the wind against them. Our Sakalave sailors did not know much more than we did and, in any case, they left things up to us, by respect for the holy fancies of white men.

"Therefore, we used to set sail. We would tie the ropes right or left, at random, to see how it would turn out. Mostly, it did not turn out so well. At times the wind would swell the sails, then drop out, like a woman switching long skirts.

"The boat advanced, turned about, came back, passed over the same places, cut across her own wake, made patterns as intricate as a tie knot. We followed the coast constantly, for fear of getting lost. We halted each evening, to eat and sleep, but we anchored near land. It often happened that we went back instead of forward. Then our Sakalaves would call us *machicoures*, which means farmers in their tongue, and must be, therefore, a great outrage for sailors. But we were no sailors, and their insults did not touch us.

"Those days, those first few days! They were the happiest in my life. I would awake at dawn to enjoy them, and I can still see the beautiful morn-

ing sky, the color of a ripe orange, the lantern of the boat forward still alight, but made pale by the rising sun, and aft our Sakalave pilot, erect and indifferent, his hands on the wheel.

"Almost everywhere, there were coral reefs which left big lagoons of placid water between them and the coast. These coral reefs were almost like railroad embankments, crumbled in spots, where the sea came in through a sort of canal; often, they were intact, and their crest was level. The sound of the waves breaking on them kept you company, prevented boredom, and yet made you nervous.

"On the far side of the lagoons was the mainland—at times a wide, flat band, seen from afar. Against the sky, tall trees with flowers, blue flowers, mauve flowers, yellow flowers, with green holes beneath, alluring green holes, like caves dug in the foliage, which seemed made of green crystal. I can't explain. Using words is not my business. And all that was deserted by men. Only rats, crabs, flowers, birds and bees. The birds yelled for the fun of yelling, not from fear.

"BUT the water, the water inside those lagoons! So transparent that you could see the bottom at fifty or sixty feet; all planted, branched, leafed with coral trees, blooming violet, green and pink; fish leaped, danced, played in this water almost as light and lucid as the air, fish of all colors: streaked, spotted, big and little, some spiny, others like butterflies, still others with beaks like parrots.

"At the bottom, huge oysters opened, showing their nacre, cloudy or clear; blue scallops, twisted shells, pink little corals. Also, fierce fish which hunted the others. One night, I remember, I was awakened by the word shark, and in the moonlight I saw one of our native sailors with his jaws shaped like an animal's maw, crouching over the rail with a spear in his hand.

"Elsewhere, there were no lagoons. The coast, stripped by the gusts from the ocean, or sterile because there were no fresh water streams, was almost nude. There one saw few beautiful things, but only two or three skinny palm trees, which looked like a few bristles on an old broom; then, Plevech and I, we'd laugh and kid the scenery. We were not mad, we were not drunk; it was pure joy at feeling ourselves so free and so alive, to know that soon we would come to other earthly paradises, other natural aquariums, other aviaries without bars.

"The one thing we could not explain was that the natives appeared happier when there were no lagoons, no aquariums, no corals and no paradises. It was not the fear of grounding. Ten feet offshore there was plenty of depth. Our conclusion was that they were fools: A fool is, to start with, some one you can't understand. Then the one who spoke French best, Rainebouze, explained to us that on these reefs came beings who led an evil life: Sorcerers, *matoutouas*—that is, restless souls—*kinoulys*, horrible ghouls, covered with half decomposed flesh, and which eat men.

"I decided that they were really fools, and one morning, with an old sail, I dressed as a *matoutoua* to give them a scare. But Plevech was sore. He told me that, after all, his father and mother also believed in all sorts of werwolves, and that it annoyed him to see fun poked at those things.

"He had in mind also, though he did not say it, that it brought bad luck.

"The evening of that same day we dropped anchor in one of the channels into a lagoon. We had sulked all afternoon. I recall that it had been very hot. We were weary and did not talk. Neither absinthe nor dinner altered the situation. And then, suddenly, we were swept by a type of causeless happiness, supernatural and extraordinary, almost terrifying. Have you ever smoked opium? You feel yourself growing lighter and lighter, you no longer feel

your body. It was ten times as if we had smoked opium, so Plevech told me.

"'Are we on a mountain top? The air has no weight. It seems to me that I am two thousand feet above the sea. And feel how cool it it?'

"'I feel the cool,' I replied. 'But I also smell the odor of home, the smell of France.'

"'Yes,' he said, 'the odor of home in the Summer, the scent of air whipped by a good, stormy rain. What is it? What can it be? And look, those black brutes are afraid.'

"Yes, they were afraid. They looked at the water, suddenly become a dark green which I had not seen before. There are persons whose eyes darken when they grow angry. It was like that. They looked into the sky also, a sky without clouds, without wind, with only, in the west, a strange coppery color. Something like a badly scrubbed caldron, at the same time dirty and shiny. I said to Plevech:

"'It is no longer cool now. I'm freezing.'

"Right in Mozambique Strait, a Siberian cold was upon us. But as Plevech was about to reply, he was thrown down, almost, by our four Sakalaves, who had leaped on the cordage and were lowering sails. At the same time, I heard the shrill cries of a flock of gulls fleeing toward land, then a sort of enormous moaning which came from all corners of the sky. It was the wind making the sea yell!

"That wind had come faster than an express locomotive, and the water roared beneath it, I swear. A sort of great lamentation uttered without cessation; and already, on the sea side of the reef, the waves tumbled over each other like houses in an earthquake. I understood, it was a cyclone, the terrible cyclone of the Indian Ocean, which sometimes carries vessels two miles inland, on the crest of a tidal wave. I wanted to leap overboard and swim to the reef. Plevech said:

"'Why? The waves break over it. Let's stay here. This lagoon is like a harbor, where we would be moored to a wharf.'

"The Sakalaves, although they swam like fish, seemed of the same opinion. They crouched at the bottom of the boat, motionless. Nevertheless, Rainebouze, who knew a little French, lifted his head to speak.

"'It's the night of the dead! They're coming back!'

"Then, Plevech who had not entered a church since his first communion and who read communist papers, crossed himself. Rainebouze did not cross himself, but took, in a chest, a chicken tied by the legs, sliced its head off with a single knife stroke and allowed the blood to drip into the sea. Plevech nodded approval, made marks on his naked chest with that blood. He had become altogether a savage, had Plevech. Yet he was four thousand years more advanced than they were.

"Our boat was in a nook of the channel, like a sparrow nestled between a roof and a chimney pot. The cyclone luckily passed above her, she was so tiny. A larger ship, offering more surface, would have been lost. It was not a wind that blew in a single direction, that whirlwind. The air spun, spun, spun, as if caught at the end of a sling. The water whirled beneath it, almost as rapidly, as if it had been the missile in the sling. The disturbance reached the very bottom. It tore off shells, corals, bits of those mineral trees that we had admired. And suddenly the air became horribly still, impossibly motionless, while formidable waves still swept by.

"'How light it is!' I said.

"We were in the middle of a dreadful black pit, made of whirling clouds. But right above us, the sky had become pure, unbelievably pure! You could see stars that the eyes of men never had seen. It is said that it's always like that in the center of a cyclone. And these quiet stars, these stars laughing at us mockingly, lighted the furious

waters. It is at that moment, at that precise moment, that I again heard the voice of Rainebouze:

"'*Matoutouas! Lakane* of the *matoutouas* of the sea! The great ship of the sea ghosts!"

"THEN he fell face forward on the deck. And I saw her, the great *lakane* of the *matoutouas!* You do not believe, do you, that ships can come up from the bottom of the sea, ships that are not submarines? I, I saw that night, a great ship come out of the sea and float! A great ship without masts, save for a single jutting stump from a poop built like a house, a hull in which coral had grown until it seemed lined with stone, a hulk held together by sea weeds twisting like lianas, timbers crusted with shells, inhabited by giant crabs enraged at being disturbed, by flat fish which leaped from the wreck and dropped back into the sea, swarming with horrible worms long as my arm, pink and white, writhing about, and—and by the *matoutouas!*

"Through wide gaps, this three-master sunk perhaps three centuries ago, and brought to the surface by a miracle, spewed torrents of dirty water, emptied, lightened.

"And we saw, through these torrents, human skulls and bones, with chains circling shinbones, start to drop, remain suspended a second, fall into the waves; then more and more. A cascade of bones and old iron! At times one of the giant crabs would release its grip and drop also.

"The three-master lumbered toward the reef, jerkily, like a heavy cart. As each wave smote her, the water she contained washed from forward to aft, battered against the rotten sides, knocked out timbers with other skeletons and more irons; and she still came on, toward the reef, toward *us!*

"Her keel scraped the rock, sprang forward anew, struck a last blow, from which the reef resounded like a hollow, sonorous bell, then collapsed so quickly that I thought of a person dropping on both knees.

"The prow shattered in a mass of horrible fragments which the waves dispersed in the spray. The poop remained in sight longer, showing dimly, in the luminous night, its open cabins similar to the cuts of houses one sees at times in the papers and which show the interior of apartments, with the furniture and people in them.

"Furniture? Old cannon which the corals had crusted, a sort of long coffer which might have been a bed, things of rusty metal, perhaps naval instruments. Inhabitants? A man, whose bones had been crushed by a falling beam; and amid all that, those big worms of which I spoke, which stirred, crawled, went back into water waving their pointed, blind heads!

"How long did it last? I don't know. It was very short, perhaps. After that dreadful calm, the wind had come again. The remnants of that magic ship, of that unnatural ship, lined with stone, wrecked and afloat, loaded with a crew of corpses in chains, leafy with weeds, alive and dead—had shattered! But the sea brought toward us the carved figurehead, placed forward of her when she had been a ship like other ships and not a disgusting phantom.

"I suppose it was a pagan goddess or some saint. But it was almost impossible to tell. The storm, or the passing years, had removed the lower part of the body, the worms had eaten the skull; two gnawed breasts, a hole in place of the neck, a big nose remained intact by chance, while the eyes had gone. That's all that could be distinguished—the image of an owl more than that of a woman. And it's amusing and terrible, come to think of it, that elapsed time can make of statues what it makes of women: Something to be afraid of!

"But Plevech, half insane, swore that he had seen such things in the grottoes of his country, near the ancient stones, and Rainebouze said that it was the

same as the figures which sorcerers placed in graves.

"Plevech repeated over and over: 'In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost!' and Rainebouze, who had been to the mission church at Majunga, answered: 'Amen!' with devotion. But after that, he did something with grains to make *sikidy,* that is to say cast a spell; he killed another chicken, and Plevech imitated his gestures, because he feared that after all it might be the true religion, that of Rainebouze, while he was not at all certain that the Christian faith availed against such spirits.

"As for me, I did not dare think. It was three days later, when the swell was altogether calmed, that I questioned Rainebouze.

" 'The ship of the *matoutouas,* what was she?'

"Rainebouze looked at me, proudly, seriously.

" 'Slaves,' he said, 'all slaves! Filled with slaves was the great ship. Bound for Bourbon. Fastened with chains. Stolen from Madagascar by white men. But Madagascar would not let them go, and their shadows lifted the sea, that they might return, that their shadows might bring their bones to their homeland!'

"I understood what he meant: The slaveship kidnaping the Malgasy, two or three centuries ago, then pushed to the coast by a cyclone, sinking. These poor devils, these blacks, with irons on their legs, drowning like rats. And, three hundred years later, the return of their bones to the land where slept their ancestors and their sons."

* * *

I interrupted Barnavaux:

"But the three-master? How did she happen to reappear?"

"How do I know?" Barnavaux replied. "The great whirling of the water tore her from the bottom. Then there was gas, in the hold, probably. And then—well, I saw her, I saw her!"

At this moment the sailors of the lifeboat passed by, swinging their shoulders, quiet, but with the keen, superhuman glance of men who have fought danger and won. Barnavaux called them in to have a drink. They pulled benches under their thighs after greeting us. And I told them what Barnavaux had related.

"I don't know if that's true," the coxswain said, "but when I was aboard the *Epervier,* at Santiago in the Pacific, I saw a schooner, which had sunk I don't know how long before, come out of the sea on a stormy night. She has been put in some kind of a museum. There are in the sea, on the sea, things—more things than the imagination of men can possibly invent."

The DEVIL'S

DONALD RICHMOND, alias Don Everhard, American gambler and adventurer, had been a relentless foe of crookdom from his youth. But his methods more often than not seemed to ally him with the forces against which he was working, so won him little regard from the police. J. K. James, the Washington undercover man, was one of the few who knew Everhard intimately; accordingly he enlisted his services in the grim, secret fight against the international blackmail ring whose symbol was a death's head, and whose chief, known as La Tête de Mort, was believed to have his headquarters in Paris.

The methods of the blackmailers rarely varied: They would frame some one whose wealth was unquestionable and, when all hope was lost for the victim, La Tête de Mort would assume the rôle of a powerful friend—thus gaining an unbreakable stranglehold on the chosen prey. The ring played for millions only.

Everhard came to Washington at James' request when the child of Judge Washburn, a noted jurist, was kidnaped by La Tête de Mort. Washburn refused to accede to certain demands relative to spurious stocks against which he had passed a judgment, and the child was murdered.

James checked over the brokers dealing in the crooked stocks, and became suspicious of Thomas Wattison, of Wall Street. Wattison was a heavy spender on Broadway, although his income was comparatively modest . . . And James' suspicions were justified when Wattison's safe was looted and yielded records which implicated him beyond doubt with La Tête de Mort. Also there was the passport of the criminal band—a death's head ring in which was a beautifully executed miniature of Wattison. The broker managed his escape before an arrest could be made.

James determined to send Everhard to Paris, where he had spent his youth. He told Everhard that a clever Frenchman, known as Monsieur X, would work

PASSPORT

Continuing a Novel of the Parisian Underworld

By

GORDON YOUNG

with him as soon as Everhard proved himself trustworthy to the Paris operative; and warned him against one Isobel de Nevers, known to be a genius at disguise and believed to be a tool of the blackmailers. To allay the suspicions of La Tête de Mort, James pulled wires to have it appear to the world that Everhard was fleeing from the police because of bootlegging activities on the Pacific Coast.

On the liner Everhard was approached by a young Frenchwoman who told him her name was Vilette Laramie. Everhard caught her in several lies, and became suspicious of her. Also there was another passenger who aroused the American's interest—a bearded, heavily bespectacled man who was never seen without a lumpy looking cushion which he seemed to value highly—about which he appeared very nervous.

Everhard, to get his hands on the cushion, paid a boy and girl to stage a mock fight near the old man's chair to throw him off guard. The plan worked, and Everhard got the pillow to his cabin, where he found it to contain a quarter of a million dollars in bills of large denomination.

"Poor old grandpa," he chuckled, eyeing the pile of banknotes and thinking of their bearded owner. "His lifetime stealings all gone!"

EVERHARD took a one thousand dollar bill, turned on the light and held the note against it. He closed his eyes and rubbed it. His fingertips were as sensitive as his eyes. He gave the bill a flip and watched it drift with zig-zag planing and settle to the floor.

He took a slip from a pillow and laid in the sheafs of money, placing them neatly. He tucked in the corners, folded over the flap, got needle and thread from his "housewife" kit and sewed up the pillow slip. He folded over the newspaper on the floor, rolling the cushion and scattered floss into a tight package and tied it firmly with string, then went about on his hands and knees, looking for any film of floss. There wasn't any.

He unlocked his suitcases, not wanting them knifed, and put the two automatics and extra clips into his pockets, not wanting them found. He poked a bit of cardboard into the side of a suitcase so that if it were opened the cardboard would drop. He looked about thoughtfully, satisfied.

He put on his topcoat, stuffed the sewn pillow slip under one arm below the coat, the package wrapped with newspaper under the other. He remembered the pillow from which he had taken the slip. It would not do to leave that. He put aside the newspaper package, but kept the money under his arm and took up the slip-less pillow, hiding it under his coat. He stepped into the corridor, passed several cabins, knocked on a door lightly, then went in. Ten seconds later he was out again, returning to his own quarters with a pillow in a fresh slip under his coat.

Everhard went at once to the boat deck; he watched his chance and when no one was looking he tossed the package wrapped with newspaper down a ventilator. Whoever found it could think what he liked. Grandpa couldn't tell his troubles to anybody and give a description of the missing cushion.

"That's the worst of being a thief," Everhard mused. "He's got to keep his mouth shut."

He went down to the purser's office, not to the window, but to the door, where he beckoned to the clerk.

"I'm due in Brussels as chief witness on a case. I've just seen reason to think there's somebody on board that doesn't want certain evidence to leave the ship—in my hands. I've used a pillow case. Charge me with the case and put it in the safe, will you?"

"Certainly, Mr. Burnett."

The clerk sealed the case and gave Everhard the ticket. He looked expectantly, but did not get a tip and so thought that Everhard must have been telling the truth.

Everhard went into the saloon and sat down at the same table where a chess game was being played. He unobtrusively pushed the button, suggested that the players have something. He ordered Vichy and chewing gum for himself. The players took beer.

He sipped Vichy and chewed gum. He worked the gum into two balls between his teeth; tossed one into the cuspidor and palmed the other. He leaned forward, bending low to study the board and, reaching far under the table, pressed the gum and purser's ticket carefully against the underside of the table.

Grandpa came along with his colored glasses low on his nose so he could see over them. His long overcoat hung limp. He turned his head from side to side as if anxiously looking for somebody. He peered about the room, turning round and round, then went away, shuffling along with head outthrust, seemingly worried.

Everhard went out on deck followed by a boy carrying two hot lemonades.

Miss Laramie stirred out of the rug where she lay drowsily and said—

"How nice!"

There was not even the hint of inquiry in her glance. She seemed to have forgotten all about the cushion.

Grandpa was gone, but grandma wasn't. Now and then grandma would sit up, lean forward and peer about the deck, reach over and move grandpa's

rug, and otherwise peer about to see if the cushion had come back—or somehow been overlooked in the previous search. Then she moved into grandpa's chair and pretended to sleep, but she had brushed the hair away from her left ear.

Miss Laramie said:

"Excuse me a minute. I will be back."

She returned shortly, carrying a magazine.

"I wanted this, and saw the woman who had it going to the library."

THEY sipped lemonade and spoke of Plymouth, due to be reached on the morrow. Everhard mentioned the day's run.

The first gong rang.

"Already!" said Miss Laramie, and pushed aside the rug to stand up. "I simply must have a little walk before dinner. Coming along?"

Everhard fell in beside her, limping slowly.

"Did grandpa show any interest—after the fight?"

"He looked as if he might faint. He shook his rug. He got down on his knees. I thought he was about to pray, but it was only to look under the chair. He swore at grandma and made her stand up and shake herself. He asked me to sit up. Or rather ordered me. I thought he was going to search me."

"You knew he wasn't looking for a collar button. Vilette, are you an honest girl?"

"Sometimes."

"Do you turn in lost umbrellas and vanity cases? Pretty ones, I mean?"

"So far."

"Then you don't want to go with me to the south of Italy? Spend the Winter?"

"On grandpapa's ticket?"

"Yes."

She studied his face. Her dark eyes were a little perplexed, but her mouth smiled alluringly and her eyes brightened as she nodded.

"Oh, let's do!"

"If I didn't have a wife waiting for me, you would surely be nice to go with," he said.

Vilette Laramie frowned, puzzled. He spoke and looked exactly as if he did have a wife waiting for him and must tell the truth about it.

"Please, do not say things like that. And do you think I care how many wives you have?"

She pursed her red, unrouged lips in a pretty pout and wistfulness darkened her dark eyes.

Everhard said nothing until they were overtaken and passed by a striding couple who were in a hurry to do their mile. When they were well by he asked:

"Will it be all right for your name—not your real name, but the one you are using now—to be in the papers?"

"Please, no!" There was a startled emphasis in the protest.

"And a picture of your sweet face would be worse?"

"No, no, no!" she said hastily. "Why do you ask? I am supposed to be on a visit to my family in Spain."

"Why Spain?"

"I do speak Spanish. I don't know why I said Roumanian. I might have said Italian, or Spanish."

"But you wanted to tell me something utterly unreal so I'd have less chance to guess? You thought I might be suspicious of a French girl, eh?"

"Ah, monsieur," she said with affectionate warning, "do not ask the questions, now. There are many things that I must tell you soon. But the one that really matters is, I do love you!"

"I know. You told me that immediately when we met. The first morning."

His casualness brought the puzzled look back to her face. He grinned at her, and on pretense of pushing a flying wisp of loose hair from her face, pulled it, saying enigmatically—

"I see I'm not out of the woods yet."

"Do you not like me?"

"You'll think so when you see what I shall give you from grandpa's—guess how much?"

"Very much?"

"Enough for a pleasant Winter at Naples. Above six million francs."

"*Mon dieu!* Really?"

"How much of it do you want?"

She shook her head, watching him. He said—

"If you shake your head at six million, just what is your price, Vilette?" She moved closer and, with face lifted, whispered—

"Any little thing—or nothing—from you!"

"You are going to be surprised at how generous I am."

There was no possible way for her to tell what he meant; but she tried, with an alert, shrewd, searching look. Then with petulant mystification and retaliatory hint, she murmured—

"I think maybe too that some one else is also surprised—soon!"

She laughed a friendly warning, then ran from him and went to dress for dinner.

Everhard cautiously opened the door of his stateroom, ready for visitors. He knew that grandpa couldn't have got his hands on a quarter of a million dollars without being a smart man.

Everhard nosed about inquiringly, and did not need the piece of cardboard on the rug to see that his room had been searched, cautiously, but without Vilette Laramie's dexterous touch.

CHAPTER VI

MR. WATTISON OF NEW YORK

THERE were clowns' caps, puff balls and confetti ribbons at the dinner tables because the *Trivilia* was due at Plymouth the next day.

Vilette Laramie looked rather like a demure princess under a beruffled cardboard diadem. Her dark silken hair was twisted maturely about her young head. She had lovely hands.

That evening Everhard remained with her. Feigning lameness, he could not dance, and she didn't. He watched, a little suspiciously, the mysterious, half furtive glow in her eyes that were strangely thoughtful when she lapsed into a moment's silence.

"What's wrong, Vilette?"

"I am quite happy. Is that wrong?"

"Something up your sleeve, eh?"

"Of course not. Absurd. How can you? A mere child, such as I?"

"You've aged fast."

He went to her cabin with her and stepped inside for a suspicious look about. Her things were in slight disorder.

"Now, Miss Detective, guess who your visitor was this time."

She moved a forefinger about her face, indicating whiskers.

"You won't be uneasy?"

"I? At this? Ho-o!" She pitched her handbag on to the bed and turned.

"If you but knew—some things." She thoughtfully put the tips of her fingers together, as if doing something difficult and delicate. Her hands dropped, and with an upward look she smiled shyly. "You messed my things worse than this, and I slept quite all right."

"But mine was a friendly interest—no?"

"I wonder—" her look was soft, mysterious, alluring— "I wonder if it would be if you knew—something."

Somehow, without seeming to move she had got close to him, almost against him. He put an arm around her. Unresisting, she swayed close. He mussed her hair a little, pulled at an ear lobe, fiddled with a locket, pulled her nose and lifted her chin on a forefinger; then kissed her on lips that moved not at all.

"How," she asked calmly, "did you know that I am a lady's maid? And this, now? After you were afraid before?"

"Then you aren't going to Italy with me?"

"Oh, certainly! But I am curious."

"Very well. Ours was a little game, wasn't it? You were sent across to come back with me. See if I was human. I won the game, but I am nevertheless

human. Besides, what's wrong with kissing a pretty girl who is playing on your side? Until I was sure, I restrained myself." Then, seriously, "Don't worry, Vilette. Monsieur X won't be so hard on you. You are to have all the credit for turning in grandpa."

Her eyes steadied, then became tearful. She laughed, not happily.

"I don't know what you will think."

Her voice was solemnly calm. The dark eyes fell broodingly. A tear or two trickled down her face. She lifted her hands suddenly to his shoulders, held him back gently at arms' length and the trembling of her lips became an unhappy, low pleading.

"Don't go to Paris!"

Her tone did not warn; it begged.

"Too late to start a new deal, don't you think?"

"New deal?"

"If you can stop me from going to Paris, then they'll know I'm not the man they want. And you'll get all the credit for spotting my weaknesses."

"It isn't that!" she cried in a low voice, full of pain, and clutched him convulsively, pressing against him. She locked her hands behind his head and her eyes glistened bright, hot, intense, through the tears. "It is because I do love you! Don't you know—haven't you even guessed? It is you who have been tricked!"

"Be nothing new in my life!" He was unimpressed.

She, desperately tense, shook him, pleading:

"Don't you see I am risking everything to warn you? And you laugh at me! Oh, please believe me! They learned that this Monsieur X was sending a woman across to watch you. Return with you on the boat." The words came as fast as a bee's hum. "She started, but that was all. What happened, I, of course, do not know. But I was given her passport. I am as young—almost—as she. I have her eyes. I, too, speak languages. That is why I called myself Roumanian. She meant to call herself that. She speaks it. I do not. There I made a slip. Monsieur X does not yet know that she is not on this boat!"

"You are lying." He said it indifferently and so concealed the feeling that perhaps she wasn't. "Besides, you can't lie well enough to get by grandpa's millions. You turned 'em down cold. No daughter of the devil would! Wiggle out of that one."

"I take that money? I'd be suspected, questioned, not believed! We dare never to deceive La Tête de Mort! Besides, he will get the money anyhow, and reward me!"

"How the hell will he get it? I've got it."

"No, no, dear. The purser has it!"

"You don't snooze in that chair as much as you pretend, do you?"

She smiled a little, and looked as if about to say something surprising—then did:

"I know all about you, Don Everhard! Know all that the real Vilette Laramie knew, for she told them everything. They have a way of getting answers when they question. Oh, why try to fool La Tête de Mort!"

"You know, I think I'd better choke you." He considered it reflectively, not in earnest but as if he might be soon.

"Some day somebody will, for talking to you like this. We daughters of La Tête de Mort must not fall in love. And don't, don't, *don't* go to Paris! You are known. You will be shot down, stabbed, drowned—"

"Child, you're lying like hell. If you can scare me out, I'll go to the discards and you'll be ace high again with Monsieur X."

"Won't you believe me? Please?"

"No. But you love me?"

She nodded.

"Good. I don't know—to tell the truth—whether you're phony or not. But I'm going to Paris. If you love me—or yourself—kick in and help me chase Mister Death's Head out of the woodpile."

"Darling, I am not lying," she said tenderly. "But please do not go to Paris.

Take the money—grandpapa's—and go to Italy. Wait for me there. I will come. I will give you back the ticket and nobody will ever know that—"

"You'll give me what?" Everhard asked tensely, puzzled.

She drew away quickly, stepping back. Without looking, she extended a groping hand toward the handbag on the bed. She opened the bag, felt about with slender fingers, and drew out the purser's receipt, offering it.

Everhard eyed it, touching her hand, not the ticket, until he saw the chewing gum's mark. He pushed the hand aside, gently; then with the gambler's smile;

"You win. I can't beat that one." He patted her cheek lightly, with approval. She again offered the receipt; he again gently put her hand aside. "Not I! And I won't peep. It's all yours—to do with as you please. You've the best right to it anyhow—spotted grandpa." He added softly, "I'm going now. But one question, if I may. How'd you do it?"

She shrugged her shoulders, her glance following the receipt that she idly put back into the bag. The bag clicked. She tossed it again on to the bed.

She was standing well back now, more than an arm's length from him. Her hands lifted and moved sensitively about her hair, touching the strands that he had disarranged.

"When a man who never chews gum does chew gum right after he has received a ticket that he doesn't want stolen— Beloved, wouldn't you look for it under the table where you saw him sitting while he chewed gum?"

She said it quietly, without any glee at all, quite as if the thing were too simple for vanity; but she shook her head at him reprovingly.

"And what," he asked, "did you say to the chess players—when you left me to go for the magazine?"

"That I may have dropped the setting of a ring there this morning. They were so helpful and looked all about. I did not find the setting." Then, wistfully and motionless, "Now you won't go to Paris, will you?" He said nothing. She watched his face, meeting the enigmatic look and silence. Her voice, very low, urged, "All that money, and no one will know. And I will come to you just as soon as I can arrange things."

She paused, waiting expectantly.

It seemed that he was not going to speak, but just stand and look. His face told nothing. His blue-gray eyes narrowed a little with intent peering and a gleam glittered in the pupils. He smiled. The mouth was a little twisted, but pleasant. Very softly and slowly he said:

"You are good. If you want the truth, I'll be damned if I know whether or not you're bluffing. But I'll call you. I am going to Paris!"

Everhard turned quickly, opened the door and stepped through. The door closed.

Vilette stood with an arm out as if silently begging him to come back. She moved quickly, then stopped without opening the door, and her fingers listlessly moved the latch, locking it. With a kind of trance-like brooding she opened the purse and half absently took out a cigaret, lighted it and went to the mirror. She breathed smoke at the glass and murmured wisely to her shadowed image—

"I shall feel sorry for you if you do end by loving him."

EVERHARD took a turn about the deserted deck. He said to himself that he knew damn well she wasn't a woman of La Tête de Mort—yet, after all, was she?

He opened the door of his stateroom, went in, pushed the door to, and the cane he held clicked against the bulkhead as he reached for the light switch. The light came on. He set the cane in a corner and was shifting out of his topcoat as he turned.

Grandpa stood there, without overcoat, hat, gloves or glasses. But he had a gun. Everhard let the overcoat drop

about his heels and looked at the gun with interest, pleased to see that it was not one of his. Automatic .45's were rather a nuisance with dinner clothes. He had worn them, lots of times—both of them—for he rather liked having two guns at hand; but tonight, after he knew the room had been searched, he put them away. Grandpa, a patient old fellow, looked business-like. He had had a long wait and seemed peevish.

"Sit down!"

"Thanks," said Everhard, and limped painfully to a small, straight backed chair. "My leg *is* bad. Thoughtful of you."

"To hell with your leg!" Grandpa's voice was jerky. He spoke as if grinding the words. "Make a move and I'll kill you. Kill you anyhow, if—"

"How in the world did you ever guess it?" Everhard asked brightly.

"You lousy rat! I finally woke up and went to third class. The blonde told me."

"I'll bet that baby nicked you for twenty bucks before she'd talk. Did she?"

"Shut up, damn you! Where's the stuff?"

"Purser's got it," said Everhard.

"Where's the ticket?"

"Under a table in the game room. Chess table."

"No it's not! I looked. After what she told me I remembered you'd been there. Chewing gum."

"Bad habit. I'll never do it again. But you didn't look carefully."

"The hell I didn't! I found the gum—fresh gum—but you can't string me!"

"Then it dropped and got swept out by the porter. Now it's overboard. Too bad, Grandpa!"

Grandpa's hand trembled.

"I'm going to kill you—now!"

"Not me you won't—not now. You may try it after we've split the money. But then I'll walk backward with a gun in front of me."

"Split my— I don't give you a dime! Get that, you—"

"You try to get it."

"What do you mean?"

"You know damn well what I mean. Kill me and try to claim that stuff on a cock-and-bull story but no receipt. I've lost the ticket. Tickets do get lost. I can fix it with that clerk. If you think you can—shoot!"

"When'll you get it?"

"How much is my cut?"

"Ten thousand!"

"Yeah?"

Everhard looked the older man over carefully with a gambler's eyes, noticing why he had been wearing very dark glasses and gloves, and knew that he would have killed him as quick as step on a bug, except that $250,000 was too much to pay for the pleasure.

"I believe you've got that ticket."

"You're a liar. But if you really think so, just lead me into the bathroom to splatter my brains. The room steward's a nice boy. I'd like to save him as much work as possible."

"Stop your damned wisecracking, will you!" He fairly screamed, and leaned forward, thrusting out the gun.

"Ticket or no ticket, *you* try to claim a package the purser's clerk knows I planted and see what kind of hardware they put on your wrists. With me dead, you wouldn't have a chance. You'd have to describe the contents. This boat's going back to America, you know. You'd go back with it, in irons. Maybe somebody you know would be at the dock with badges on. Reception committee—for Brother Jones, church trustee and banker of Oshkosh!"

"Twenty thousand!"

"In real money?"

"Not another dime. I'll kill you first!"

"Don't lie to me. Makes me feel bad. I didn't do anything wrong. Just curiosity, you know. Wanted to see why you wouldn't let grandma carry the cushion."

"You know who I am?" The question seemed important.

Everhard answered readily—

"Never saw you in my life or anybody

that looks like you—outside the Middle West!"

The man seemed to relax a little and absently scratched his cheek with his left hand.

"And let's look at this thing from all sides, Grandpa."

"Stop calling me that!"

"All right, Fuzzy."

"You're a smart boy, you are!"

"Smarter than you think!" said Everhard, a challenge in his voice. "I not only have to hold up my own end but point out your own advantages too."

His voice was earnest, even if still a little mocking.

"What do you mean?"

"Make it fifty and I'll tell you."

"Fifty, then. But not another dime," he said at once, relieved.

"I've heard that before."

"And no welching!"

"Never welched in my life. But listen; you've got me too. If you hadn't tumbled, I'd have been in the clear. But you are smart—and tumbled. One word to the purser from you—just a hint—and I couldn't touch that stuff either. So you see, we really have to play together. Help each other." Everhard stood up. "So now that's settled. You can call for me—" Everhard's leg was weak; he held to the chair for support—"in the morning, and we'll go to the purser's office together."

"You think I'm going to let you out of my sight? Not much I won't!"

"All right." Everhard seemed resigned. "When a thing has to be done, it has to be done; however, you can do it so—"

He had hold of the chair, had it off the deck and started in a swing before the other fired in haste. The chair's rung caught the extended wrist. The rung splintered. The bullet splattered against the steel bulkhead and the gun dropped from a broken wrist. Everhard threw the chair away and jumped. The older man went over backward, right on to the bed, with two hands at his throat and Everhard's knee in his belly. Everhard jerked his opponent's head up, let go with one hand and gave him the tip of a swinging elbow squarely on the jaw. A gambler has to be careful of swollen knuckles. The man was out, clear out, with bearded mouth open and long skinny body lax as old rope.

Everhard fastidiously brushed his palms together as if wiping off a little dirt, then watchfully backed away. He picked up the gun. A dinky .32. Everhard considered such guns as little more than trinkets. He set the chair upright, bending to look with interest at the broken rung, and paused, listening. He knew that the cabin next to his stateroom was not occupied. Perhaps the shot had not been noticed. He backed to the shoe drawer below the closet, lifted the rumpled sock off a shoe and took out a .45, slipping it down into a front trousers pocket.

He went to a mirror and, keeping an eye glancing back across his shoulder, retied his bow, pulled down his vest, brushed his hair. Everhard did not like any one to see him rumpled. It might give the impression that perhaps he did at times get excited. Then he rang for the steward.

THE steward was a long time in coming. Everhard had a bill ready and stood at the half open door, handing out the banknote before he began to talk.

"Steward, this is important—as you can see." Everhard gestured slightly at the bill now in the fellow's hand. "Do what you're told, just as I tell it, and there'll be another on the table in the morning."

"Yes, sir."

"Good. First, go to cabin 381. Miss Laramie's. Tell her to come here at once and—"

"Oh—but, sir!"

"This is one time a lady can come to a man's room—with the captain's permission. Tell her she isn't to dress, but to hurry. If she hesitates, tell her grandpa has spilled the beans and I want her

to listen in."

"Right-o, sir!"

"Wait a minute. There's more. Then go to the captain. Talk to him alone. Whether he's asleep, on the bridge or dying. Tell him come here alone, and at once."

"Oh, sir—" The steward sounded doubtful.

"Tell him he's already had a confidential wireless from James of Washington about this matter. He'll come."

"Yes, sir."

"And, Steward, then you forget all about it."

"Oh, yes, sir."

"And don't recover your memory after the reporters come on board."

"No, sir."

"Good. Now skid on the corners getting there."

The man on the bed groaned, pulled a hand toward his face, drew up a leg, then suddenly put the hand to his belly. He opened his eyes, moaned, sat up as if with the cramps and glared about.

Everhard, beside the door, waiting, spoke indifferently:

"Think what you like and say it, but start something and you go to the pen's hot spot in a wheel chair. I don't cheat the electrician out of his fee."

"Then you know me!"

The man caught at his throat as if the words hurt him.

Everhard rubbed the tip of his elbow and eyed him, not speaking.

The other seemed to wilt. He felt of his broken wrist, rubbed his belly, touched his chin, then raised his head a little and looked up under shadowing brows.

"Let's make it fifty-fifty." His voice had no confidence.

"Not fifty million."

The amount seemed so trivial that there was no particular emphasis in his tone. The man on the bed sagged, but glared like a crippled snake.

Everhard heard the flap of slippered feet and pulled open the door.

Vilette, with a cloud of deep blue silk about her for a dressing gown, came in, pulling the voluminous skirt out of the way of her feet as she stepped over the coaming.

"What is it?" she asked and gave Everhard a quick look, then turned, following the direction of his hand pointing toward the bed.

"Look at him carefully, Vilette. One of the finest specimens in captivity. Worth money. A New York zoo wants him."

Vilette turned toward Everhard curiously.

"Have you been drinking?"

"There's one way to find out," he suggested. She shrugged her shoulder, smiling, and shook her head. "The captain's coming to pat us on the head. Be here any minute."

Vilette drew the blue silk about her, looked about the stateroom, then moved to the mirror. She bent forward, studying her nose, picked up the shaving talcum, sniffed it and wrinkled her nose in disapproval, but sprinkled a little on her fingers and used it.

"The captain'll think you're a pretty girl."

She smiled at him in the mirror, not answering. She opened a drawer and took out a handkerchief, rubbed her hands, dusted the powder from the blue robe and poked the handkerchief into a little laundry bag.

"Good memory you've got," he said, amused.

She lifted her eyebrows inquiringly.

"You've been in my room just once, furtively, a week ago. Remembered the handkerchiefs."

"We are trained well, we daughters of—" she tossed her palms upward—"death!"

"He belongs too, Vilette."

"He! Of them!"

She spun about, sinuously alert, and peered like a watcher in the dark at an approaching enemy. Everhard could not see her eyes. He could his captive's. They stared, snake-wicked, at the girl, then fell. There was something about

her eyes that made him flinch. She turned, demanding in French—

"Who is he?"

The dark, fever glow in her eyes was like a warning of death.

"Take it easy, Vilette. He's all through. But now, you little liar, I do know you were bluffing!"

"Who is he?" She was intense, imperative.

The steps of a solid man sounded in the corridor.

The captain loomed in the doorway. He stopped outside the coaming, looked in, watched Vilette for a moment and eyed Everhard questioningly, then stepped inside to follow Everhard's gesture and so saw the man slumped on the bed.

"What's all this, Mr. Burnett?" His voice was heavy, slow, solid; a voice to be calm during collision, fire, shipwreck.

Everhard pushed the door to.

"James of Washington will confirm what I tell you."

The man on the bed made a curious muffled sound and hunched himself forward with the look of a trapped animal.

At the mention of James, the captain's cold blue eyes lost a shade of their ice-bright light. He took his polished cap brim into his left hand and put his right on the foot rail of the bed.

"Miss Laramie spotted him the first day out. So the biggest cut in the reward goes to her."

Vilette's gasp was soft and doubtful, incredulous. The captain's eyes moved toward her. He was cautious, and not quite sure, distrusting that blue dressing gown in Everhard's room at 2 A.M.

"She gave me the tip, knowing I've handled a thing or two under James. You got his message?"

"Yes." The captain was noncommittal.

"I promoted that vaudeville fight today on deck and nailed the old boy's cushion. Took out a quarter of a million dollars."

The captain's eyes flickered a little, and he gave the man on the bed a long look. Everhard went on—

"It's in a pillow slip in the purser's safe. Miss Laramie has the ticket."

The captain's eyes moved approvingly toward Vilette.

"The old boy there guessed I'd robbed him and he came in here tonight for a showdown. We had it. There he is."

"Ah," said the captain. "Excellent."

"Her name can't be used. Neither can mine. So you take all the credit. And hang on to it with both hands. Don't let that swarm of New York reporters pry anything loose when you get back. James gave you the tip. That's your story, so make it stick. Otherwise you spoil the job Miss Laramie and I are on over here." Everhard continued rapidly, "James'll see that the reward is quietly split, three ways. Fifty to Miss Laramie. You and I halve the other fifty. As for the woman he's traveling with—she's probably some small town widow he picked up for camouflage, and meant to ditch in Europe. But take her back, too."

"But who is he?" the captain asked, showing interest.

"Hell, Captain! Shave off those whiskers and recall the wanted posters. Look at his left hand. I never saw him before we met here on shipboard, but I've seen his picture by the greatest artist that ever took a dirty crook to pieces and showed you his insides. This is that New York broker, Wattison. His dead body would poison maggots!"

All of the next morning Everhard was alone with Wattison, digging into him with persistent questions and remaining good natured about it. Wattison cursed him until his own repetition grew tiresome, then turned sullen. He would not talk. But a leech is lacking in stability of purpose, compared with Everhard.

"Wattison, the thing that licked you was the picture in that ring. Who did it?"

Wattison's right arm was in splints and a sling. With his left hand he scratched, claw-like, at his bearded, shrunken cheeks, and mumbled irri-

tably—

"I wish to hell I knew!"

"Didn't you pose for it?"

Wattison stirred as if chilled, turned his head and gazed blankly at the fog smeared port. He moved his left hand and stared at the stump of a little finger. He mumbled wearily, like a tired man talking in his sleep:

"In Paris—taken blindfolded to a room. Saw nothing. Did nothing. Just sat there. It got you. Got me—get anybody. I knew that ring was a jinx, but couldn't ditch it. A devil's passport. You'd get orders to go somewhere and wait. You'd wait. Somebody'd come. Look at the ring, then at the picture. You'd go with him. Blindfolded. Then you'd sit in a room. Somebody you couldn't see would talk to you. Tell you what to do—"

Wattison broke off abruptly, raised angry eyes, cursing himself, adding:

"If I ever do talk to anybody it won't be you. Get out, can't you? Leave me alone!"

He would say nothing more.

All the afternoon Everhard worked at a long message, putting it into cipher, giving James the details, telling him about Vilette Laramie and asking questions about her. He was so busy that he did not even go on deck during the hour or so that the *Trivilia* stopped at Plymouth.

That night at dinner he found that Vilette had left the ship.

CHAPTER VII

EVERHARD ACQUIRES A HOUSEKEEPER

THE *Trivilia* glided past the low sand dunes into Cherbourg, then went on and, as usual, picked out a foggy morning to crawl through the ditch that led to Antwerp.

A word about passports. Everhard, having three, had to know something about them. For all the assumed severity of inspection, they are laxly managed in some places. All of his were visaed for England, Spain, Italy and Germany, so that if he did have to run from Paris, he could jump at the nearest frontier. Enter France in any other way than through Belgium, and your passport is messed up with an inky stamp that tells when and where you did it. Spoils the nice clean look of the page, and may spoil the story you would like to tell later on. You may enter Belgium if the passport is visaed by a French consul. No stamp. You may go from Belgium into France, at least on the train, and though an inspector looks at the passport, the chances are ten to one he will not stamp it. Everhard was taking the way of getting into France that would make it seem quite all right not to have his passports marked with entry records.

At Antwerp he took the first train for Brussels, dropped the rubber tip from his cane out of the window, removed his shoe and threw away the split pea. He was no longer a "cripple".

Brussels calls herself the Little Paris; but it is no more like Paris than a strong hearted, broad breasted, rather grave woman is like a slim Parisienne who has sorrows and courage too, but chatters gaily and laughs—concealing both the pain and the bravery with which she hides it.

In Brussels he took a hotel room for an hour, changed clothes, getting back into his customary double breasted suit. He put the Robert Burnett passport well out of sight, and caught the first afternoon train for Paris, traveling as McDonald Richmond of San Francisco; occupation, Capitalist.

He got to Paris after dark, went straight to a hotel, filled out the police slip, and so to bed.

The next morning a Paris *Herald* reporter came in with the maid when she brought coffee and rolls. His paper had a tip that Don Richmond, alias Everhard, the big shot of the Pacific Coast hijackers, having ducked out of America, was at this hotel. He couldn't, or wouldn't, say from whence came the tip.

"Me, a hijacker? Bunk!" said Everhard. "Have some coffee?" He dunked a roll, explaining apologetically to the reporter, "Have to find some way to get this coffee down without drinking it. It's a brew of chicory, tannin and old shoe leather—or tastes like it."

"But you wouldn't say the story was bunk, even if it were not?" asked the reporter shrewdly.

"Bunk," said Everhard.

That is about all he would say. The *Herald* copied from American papers, giving the hijacker story; the French, for once, turned tables and copied from the *Herald*. Correspondents and reporters came running. Everhard said:

"Bunk. I'm here to rest."

Reporters hustled to interview officials. As Everhard had no criminal record and there was no warrant for him in the States, nobody would say that he was likely to be asked to leave the country.

So Everhard was left to do as he pleased—as long as he didn't throw paper in the gutter.

That same morning, right on the heels of the *Herald* reporter, a member of the Sûreté called. Monsieur Biradou. He came alone. A little, slim, trim man with neat, square-cut black beard, and shoulders like a bantam drill sergeant. He had black eyes that made Everhard think of graphlex lenses. Click, click, click, here and there.

Everhard did not like him. Monsieur Biradou did not seem to care. He whipped questions, now in better English than Everhard's, now in crisp vernacular French, as if wanting to see how well Everhard could lie in both tongues. Those clicking eyes took snapshots of Everhard's face from all angles.

Monsieur Biradou oddly intimated that it would be ever so much easier to permit Monsieur Richmond to remain undisturbed in Paris if a little money were forthcoming. Everhard pretended not to understand; but said to himself:

"You can go to the devil. You may be a grafter and you may not. But the minute I offer you money, you'll know I'm afraid of you—and afraid only because I have something to hide. I've got a hell of a lot to hide; but I'll be damned if I admit it. I'm standing pat."

Monsieur Biradou went away as abruptly as he had come. Everhard took the deepest breath on record—his record anyhow—and said:

"Did I get by? Or is he really as smart as he looks?"

The racketeer story stirred up the sucker catchers of Paris, male and female, to put on their best clothes, lie in wait for Everhard and try tricks; so a day or two later he bobbed almost furtively into an apartment that an agent turned up.

It was three times bigger than he needed, but very pleasant, being on the quiet Isle Saint Louis, taking in the third floor of an old four-story mansion.

Everhard knew the concierge had to turn in a report of his tenancy. Therefore the police, and those who had influence with the police, would know where to look for him.

Everhard was too cautious to advertise for a man to take care of his apartment. He read the situations-wanted advertisements and picked one Georges. Two days later Georges' mother died and he went away.

The fat wife of the little concierge suggested her cousin, a woman, as Everhard's housekeeper.

"Her age, madame?"

"That of discretion, monsieur. Forty."

"Widow?"

"Mademoiselle, monsieur."

"Ah, madame, but your cousin wouldn't like it here. Men seem peculiar to a woman of forty who has never been married."

Everhard then brought one Charles into his apartment and the scamp vanished twenty-four hours later, taking nothing, but leaving no notice.

This was irritating. Madame la concierge again suggested her cousin, but Everhard said—

"No, I thank you, but I must have a

man."

He selected an Italian, one Pietro, who disappeared hastily, saying—

"There is a little matter that I do not care to explain to the police, monsieur."

The following morning Everhard heard mysterious sounds in the kitchen, but smelled coffee.

"Ah," thought he, "one of my wandering lambs has come back."

His bedroom door opened. In came a strange woman, tall, erect, neat, long legged, with a gaunt face and bright gray eyes. She radiated energy. Her smile was not bad, her voice pleasing.

"Good morning, monsieur. I am Mlle. Houlette, the concierge's cousin, and here is your breakfast."

Everhard eyed her distrustfully. Forty, all right. But the *croissants* were hot as toast should be, the butter fresh, the jam good. Newspapers were under her arm.

"Madame my cousin thought you would not mind until you secured another valet," she explained.

"Thoughtful of madame. You speak English, mademoiselle?"

"I am so sorry, but not a word, monsieur. Monsieur's French is beautiful."

"Your side of the family are not shopkeepers and concierges," said Everhard.

"Ah, but since the war, monsieur!"

Everhard sipped the coffee, and brightened. He began to talk wages and to give instructions. She said. "Yes, monsieur," with eager humbleness. She did not frown even when he said he did not like French cookery, because all the choice dishes had a foundation of wine and liquor, which bit his palate. He admitted that there were American restaurants in Paris, but since they were no better than the restaurants in America that was reason enough to avoid them.

"As long as you make coffee like this, mademoiselle, I don't care much what else you do."

"Yes, monsieur. My family is very poor. I do so want to please monsieur."

DAYS passed. Nothing happened, except that the newspapers kept his name in the air. Curiously sensational dispatches from America blackened his already dark reputation. James' press agents were on the job, building him up as a fellow the Death's Heads must surely notice with interest.

Everhard wandered about, rather cautiously avoiding gambling clubs, cabarets and bright lights. He wanted to shun the merely accidental friends of night life, and so feel sure that anybody who made a dead set for him was under orders.

When he had been in Paris about two weeks he did one night go to the theatre to see Isobel de Nevers who, after almost a month's illness, had returned to the stage. She wore her peacock finery, gold wig, flaming egrets, and she glittered with jewelry. Even from where he sat, far back, the eyelids looked bruised and the face seemed a mask of magnolia blossoms. It was dead white. She sang naughty French songs. Her voice was nothing much, and a bit strained; but her vivacity and sheer French impudence were amusing.

He thought rather longingly of Vilette with her unrouged but red lips, her silken hair in a simple swirl, and the wary, wise look in her dark eyes.

It was just a day or two after he had gone to see De Nevers perform that he passed two people on the third floor landing of the house where he lived. They were coming down from the floor above. The man was dark, thin. He looked at Everhard with a moment's intent staring, then glanced aside and kept his eyes averted. The woman was young, softly befurred, with a complexion of burned gold, and looked as if she would like being cuddled, providing the rat eyed man by her side did not know about it.

As Everhard stepped through the door into the hallway of his apartment, Mademoiselle Houlette came out to take hat, stick and topcoat.

"Mademoiselle, who are our upstairs neighbors?"

"They came but two days days ago. As yet they have no permanent servant. A woman comes in through the day. Monsieur Guyot has a bad temper and is a wine merchant. His business must be prospering, because Madame Fifi Guyot has many diamonds."

When one is the cousin of the concierge, one learns things about tenants.

From time to time Everhard met the Guyots on stairs and landings, usually together, sometimes alone. He had strange hours for a wine merchant. Always he gave Everhard a quick, intent look and turned his head. Always her long lashes beamed star-like in a lingering stare, noncommittal, but as informative as a furtive whisper.

Then one day he met her alone. With downcast eyes she seemed to be studying the stairs, but glanced up and exclaimed:

"Oh, monsieur, I have dropped my key. And my husband has gone for a week to England. Often he goes to England and leaves me alone—" She stooped, stood up, turned, starry-eyed with delight and oozing a perfumed readiness to be cuddled. It was crude, but she meant it to be, so he couldn't help but understand.

And sure enough, there on her little palm was the key. She could not have offered it more plainly with words.

He did not take it and go with her to her door to make sure that it was really the right key, or step in for a moment to see if the view from her front windows was as good as his own, and so ease her loneliness. Instead he said easily, bowing:

"You are very beautiful, madame. So even if you had not found the key, the concierge would have been happy to open your door. Good night, madame."

Everhard went into his apartment, saying amusedly to himself:

"You will never know, Fifi Guyot, but I have been kind to you; for when the badger game trap closes on me, I turn tables and take everything in sight. And your diamonds are genuine. I know, having made a study of diamonds since they are so often offered as a pledge in poker games."

CHAPTER VIII

THE HORSESHOE CLUB

EVERHARD took his midday walk, sauntering idly above the Opera, which he thought a grand building inside and out, though it is now considered bad taste to think so; and he came to rest on a little iron backed chair at a little marble topped, iron legged table before a café that seemed trying to warm all outdoors with a row of red bellied braziers before a screen of potted box.

He sipped hot chocolate and watched the people pass.

Everhard loved Paris with all the passion that sheep voiced crooners feel, or say they do, for the leaky cottages where they were born.

A smoky, chill city in Winter; very dirty at all times. Yet bulky, muscular women in clattering *sabots* push water about with long handled brooms, scouring the streets in the early dawn. Great boulevards are kept free from litter. The rubbish of the morning street fairs is cleaned up quickly. Men and women get down on their knees, Winter and Summer, to scrub the entrance ways to buildings. Paris is no sloven, though her fair face is smudged with evil smelling carbons. The shadowy lure of mystery hovers over every building that is not new. Artists find that all the nooks, corners, streets, quays, bridges and trees of Paris, women too, are such stuff as pictures are made of, and may not be found in like profusion elsewhere in the world. Why it is so, only God, who loves artists and makes them so happy in their poverty and among their failures, can know.

Everhard became aware that a young man at a table nearby was muttering

and acting strangely. He had come in unnoticed since Everhard sat down.

His clothes were neither new nor shabby. His hands looked a little grimy, though they had been washed. Like the hands of a man who works with grease. He stared under a low felt brim as if watching for some one.

Presently the mutterer said distinctly:

"That is he! Ha! I have luck. He is coming to a table."

Everhard glanced aside and saw that the speaker had his eyes on a tall, leisurely man who was glancing about for a table. When the man drew near, the mutterer stood up with a crazed shout and drew a gun.

Everhard made a scrambling reach, knocking over chairs, and struck up the fellow's arm. The gun was discharged in the air. A moment's tussle and shrill cries, a flutter of grasping hands, then arms tightly held the would-be assassin. An excited crowd swarmed close, talking shrilly. The sidewalk began to empty itself in upon the café entrance.

Everhard was pushing back out of the way, feeling quickly for change to leave beside his plate, when a hand touched him. The near-victim of the gunman said in English:

"Come, let us get out of this together. Hasty thanks are not to be thought of. That fellow is crazy."

They climbed through a box of clipped shrubbery near the wall and pressed against the crowd. Everhard was pushed slightly and half turned to see a little old tramp of a man coming too. At that moment the crowd opened a little and Everhard hurried at the heels of the tall boulevardier.

Horns were blowing; motors were stalled in the streets with drivers standing up, trying to see. The police made their whistles scream and flourished their hands commandingly. The excitement brought more people. The police pushed like football players. Rumor ran with shrill cries through the crowd, and was caught up and echoed as fact.

At the turning of a side street, well out of the jam, the boulevardier stopped and put out his hand.

"I thank you. No doubt of it, you saved my life. That madman is a chauffeur who was turned off because he acted queerly. Now I shall arrange for him to be sent to an asylum and have proper care. My name is Hovenden."

At that moment some one brushed against Everhard. It was again the little old beardless tramp of a man in a floppy cap. He had the canvas bag at his side, the needle pointed cane, the hangdog look of one who gathers cigar and cigaret butts out of the gutter and about the chairs of the cafés. He even has a name that sounds well if you don't know what it means: *trimadeur.*

Now with rare impudence for one of his humble caste, he said, "*Gardez-vous, monsieur!*" as he stabbed at the pavement close by Hovenden's foot, whisked the needle tipped cane through down-reaching hand, passed the hand at his bag and went shuffling on along the sidewalk's edge, peering into the gutter.

"I'm damned!" said Hovenden, fingering a large, thin, circular watch charm. "A gutter picker is polite enough to say, 'Look out for yourself,' when he stabs close to one's foot!"

Everhard too looked thoughtfully after the shambling little figure in floppy cap and oversized coat. There had been no cigar or cigaret butt near Hovenden's foot.

A big fellow, this Hovenden, and not fat. Everhard suspected a corset and shoulder pads. Rather dark, beloved of tailors, and no doubt of women. He had black eyes, with a hazy look in them. He had a deep, rich voice, and was proud of it.

Everhard gave him a going over that was thorough, and distrusted his man-of-the-world air. A handsome man—if you aren't a poker player who has made a study of faces. Besides, "*Gardez-vous* echoed in Everhard's ears.

Everhard gave his name simply as Mr. Richmond, adding—

"I haven't been in Paris long."

This Hovenden had the airs of an aristocrat, an affected elegance, as if he rather expected people to be proud of his condescension and affability. Everhard was blankly studious and receptive.

Hovenden said that he was on his way to his club, The Horseshoe. He glanced keenly at Everhard's face and saw nothing but mild interest.

"Sporting club. Pleasant place to idle," said Hovenden. His fingers toyed with the dangling watch charm. "I walk this way frequently. Exercise, you know. Stop for an *apéritif*. The chauffeur knew. By the way, come along to the club and have lunch with me."

"A pleasure," said Everhard, unimpressed.

THE Horseshoe club is upstairs around a corner of the Boulevard des Italiens, a fancy place, very exclusive and famous. You turn off the street into an inconspicuous entrance, mount the stairs, and a doorman in gray and scarlet bows low, speaks welcomingly in a low voice and swings wide the door—if you are with a Hovenden.

They entered a small room where a fox faced fellow sat at a desk fingering accounts. He arose to make his bow to Hovenden, murmuring humbly. A page eagerly took hats, sticks, coats and scarfs, and carried them to a sleek brunette who, if you didn't mind the paint, was very pretty. The gray carpet had a pile that made one think of walking in soft snow. There did not seem to be any windows.

They went into the lounge. Massive chairs of red leather bulked near little tables. A man in gray uniform, without gilt, wandered about with dust pan and broom, scraping up ashes, emptying trays and pretending that he never looked at any one. Paintings, mostly of somebody at the bath, hung in wide gilt frames. There weren't many people about at this hour of the day, but such as were greeted Hovenden with deference, bowing and lifting hands at a distance.

A greasy, dark, fat, curly headed fellow, with bulky shoulders and dark eyes, came with a quick waddle toward Hovenden. He carried a freshly lighted cigar and bowed as if not presuming to offer his hand.

In a guttural, friendly tone he asked—

"How are you, Prince?"

"Oh, yeah?" said Everhard to himself and looked hard at the greasy man, but somehow not disliking him.

The fellow had the beautiful eyes of an English setter, and there was nothing slack and weak about his thick lipped mouth.

Prince Hovenden seemed a little impatient that the greasy man should approach him, and as he went away, said:

"That is Nick Dodalus. Tobacco merchant. Terrific gambler. He and Charles Birk Kurlingen fight it out here at times with specially starred gold chips. What are you drinking, Mr. Richmond?"

"Vichy."

"No cocktail?"

"Weak heart."

"Ah? Sorry to hear it."

"Very bad at times," said Everhard.

He reflected that they might put a "prince" over on him, since his was an unsuspicious nature, but they couldn't run in a phony Charles Birk Kurlingen. He once had really saved Kurlingen's life. Kurlingen, a fool for plunging, had played square in the game; so Everhard felt it necessary to do a little something to quiet the bad loser. Everhard doubted if Kurlingen ever cheated at cards. For one thing he was a rotten coward; for another, being a great financier, he knew so many ways of cheating the public that he could afford to play the cards as they came.

"Kurlingen is in England now," said Hovenden, sipping something pink out of a tall, slender glass, "but comes here often."

He showed Everhard through the club rooms, which were quite extensive and very elegant. He introduced him

to two or three persons simply as Mr. Richmond, and said nothing about the mad chauffeur. People seemed to think that Everhard was being very much honored by Hovenden's interest.

After lunch, he took Everhard to the secretary, who looked like an elder brother of the fox faced man in the anteroom, and had a guest card issued. Hovenden also rather urgently suggested that Everhard be his guest soon on a little party-trip through the cafés. Must do what he could, he said, to make Mr. Richmond's stay in Paris pleasant.

THE next morning Everhard sat up in bed sipping Mademoiselle Houlette's excellent coffee and fingering the newspapers, The Paris *Herald, Le Matin, Le Figaro,* and so read three times that a discharged chauffeur, in a café on the Boulevard Haussmann, had attempted the life of Prince Henri de Rougemont Hovenden El Kasyd. Waiters and bystanders had overpowered the maniac.

Everhard grunted meditatively and scratched the side of his nose, then pulled at an ear lobe and reread the items.

When mademoiselle, stirring her shapeless skirts with a long stride, came for the tray, he asked—

"Ever hear of this Prince Henri de Rougemont Hovenden El Kasyd?"

Mademoiselle Houlette gazed studiously into space and shook her head.

"Monsieur must remember that I have not lived long in Paris. But my cousin—I can inquire of her. She knows every one. I go at once, monsieur."

She turned, radiating energy as a diamond casts off sparkles; and soon returned with brightened eyes.

"Ha, monsieur! My cousin says that he is the son of old Prince Fered El Kasyd, who almost became King of Egypt, but the English, they would not permit. It would have been a great thing for France, but those English, monsieur!"

As soon as old Prince Fered, dead these twenty years, was named as the father of the present El Kasyd, Everhard began to remember things. Terrible stories had been told of old Fered. Everhard, a child, lifted above the crowd on the shoulders of Papa Brule, in whose family of pretty children he had been left to learn French—and good manners—had once seen the famous carriage, drawn by four black horses at a gallop; and Everhard had had a hasty glimpse of a gray beard, hooked nose, vulturous, keen eyes, and a wasted body sitting bolt upright. It was said that behind the ancient stone walls of Prince Fered's house, which was within two stone-throws downhill from St. Étienne, and so not far from Notre Dame, the old prince and his *fellahs* did terribly cruel things because he could get pleasure in no other way.

The French foreign office, until the day of his death, had hope that some coup would make him King of Egypt, and so vastly increase French influence in North Africa. The El Kasyds were a mixed breed of bad bluebloods, and for a hundred years had been marrying among European nobility.

"Your cousin did not mention, mademoiselle, that the present prince, who calls himself Hovenden, is hard up?"

"No, monsieur."

"I may have heard some place, or dreamed it, that he was so impoverished that he had taken over an interest in a fashionable gambling club."

On the way out, shortly before noon, Everhard met Madame Thurot, the concierge, at the cobbled courtyard entrance. She was as fat as a barrel, but there was nothing of the sloven about her; and if your tips were as they should be, she loved you. Her tongue clacked a cheery greeting.

"By the way, madame, did you ever hear that the present Prince El Kasyd has pawned the family jewels?"

"*Fichtre!* How I hope so! One doesn't hear of that devil's family now as when old Fered was alive. You are the first to mention his name in years."

"So?"

"It is so, monsieur. Ha, what a family! Well, well. I had not thought of old Fered since that beast Landru had his head chopped off for killing so many of us poor women. If the truth were known, old Fered—I but tell what I have heard—killed hundreds in that ancient house of his, and died of old age."

Everhard strolled toward Notre Dame, clicking the pavement with the cane's tip to punctuate the wondering of why Mademoiselle Houlette should pretend that she must first inquire of her cousin the concierge before speaking of Hovenden.

"Is it that she wants me to think she is stupid and knows nothing? Hmm. I may not even trust one who makes such excellent coffee and itemizes every centime of her marketing accounts, eh?"

He took a large, square and carefully sealed envelop from his pocket and examined the seal on the flap. This was stamped, addressed, all ready for mailing at an instant's notice, and contained the two extra passports. The seal had not been touched.

"I shall sleep with it under my pillow from now on," he assured himself. "And perhaps I can have a dream that will explain why my three men servants all so quickly disappeared to give the attentive Mademoiselle Houlette the opportunity of living with me."

CHAPTER IX

ELEMENTARY STUFF

EVERHARD thought that it was up to him to loaf about in the Horseshoe Club and let Hovenden, and such others as had been concerned in the little frameup of the mad chauffeur, look him over. They took their time about it. Everhard was, or was supposed to be, a big racketeer. On the other hand, any one who inquired closely into his record would have learned that in his time he had hurt a good many men, all of them crooks, some of whom wore tall silk hats at night—like Hovenden.

Hovenden had taken him out at night, visiting queer places and mingling with lovely ladies. But when it came to women—and cards—Everhard picked his own. He wouldn't play with those whom a man he distrusted ran in on him. He would not drink. He would not talk of himself. Hovenden seemed vaguely irritated.

Everhard would not even play poker. He had looked the Horseshoe over carefully, and with some reluctance decided that it did appear to be a genuine private club which tried to keep out sharpers and give rich men a chance to go the limit. Of course, the management had to be on the lookout for smart boys who posed well and got in. Nobody had invited him to play; yet he had the suspicious feeling that he was being watched; and rather guessed that Hovenden, or somebody, thought it would be nice to catch him cheating and so have something on him—perhaps put him to work at the card tables and demand that he divide the profits. Everhard was on to the queer tricks of most shady games.

From ten days to two weeks went by. Everhard idled about the club, looking on. He, a good judge in matters of the kind, thought the poker games were on the square. He did monkey a little with a roulette wheel, just to give the club some money to pay for the wear and tear on its big red leather chairs. Outside of that, he stood pat, waiting. Waiting for somebody else to make the next move.

In loafing about he had become rather well acquainted with Nick Dodalus, the swart, greasy, bejeweled Greek, who wanted to be friendly. He seemed rather disliked by everybody and was indeed a terrific gambler. One reason the club seemed honest was because nobody trimmed Dodalus, who would play two pair like four of a kind, and if he had three in a row would somehow get over the impression that he was bluffing. Everhard, watchful and critically approving, felt kindly toward the Greek. He played poker! He was as eager as a

lonely dog to be liked by gentlemen. Many of the gentlemen would hardly speak to him, unless making a night of it in a rowdy place. Then they would pat him on the back just before the bill came and say—

"You're a great fellow, Nick."

But Hovenden did not play poker or go to rowdy places.

One evening Dodalus waved his freshly lighted cigar near Everhard's face, showing off the diamond flash of his fingers, rocked back on his heels and inquired:

"Do you ever play poker? There's a game in the room over here, and the boys want it six-handed."

He had a muddled accent, though a ready tongue. His greasy curls glistened, and the heavily lidded eyes were bright. A wrestler's shoulders held up his big head. Some little quirk of unnatural excitement, a strained casualness, made him a bit uncomfortable.

Everhard glanced piercingly into the Greek's sad, lonely eyes, now a little bright.

"Thanks. Are you playing?"

"Me? No—I'm going to a show. But I'll introduce you."

They walked noiselessly through the thick pile of the carpet and entered a private room.

Five men were at the table. Everhard did not recall having seen any of them about the club before. They stood up. Introductions passed, handshakes, affable words. Three Americans, one Russian and a Turk. The Turk and Russian were wearing greenish blue glasses. At a glance, Everhard knew the type, knew what to expect. He had not expected this sort of thing in the Horseshoe, certainly not from Dodalus. Everhard made it a point to try always to be ready for anything in the way of crooked poker. He gave the greenish blue glasses a passing glance and was content. In sitting down, he adjusted his coat to ease the outline of the shoulder holster. He was carrying only one gun at the time.

The Turk was banking.

"I've got a dead horse to work off. Don't feel lucky," said the Turk. "But you've got to get the streak of bad luck out of your system. Sooner the quicker."

"Hell, look at me," said one of the Americans. "Dropped a hundred thousand last night. Two hands! One of 'em a full house. The other was a blazer."

"What about the jinx I've been carrying?" demanded another American.

Everhard drew his wallet, indifferently letting them see that it was bulky with big notes. He handed the Turk a ten thousand franc note and received a pile of chips. He was offered the deal, but passed it.

Nick Dodalus threw away his cigar and lighted another. He liked having fresh cigars in his mouth. He glanced at his watch, and put his polished foot on a chair's rung, pausing to look on for a hand or two.

Everhard, ignoring the dealer, caught Dodalus' eyes. Dodalus' stare lingered for a moment, then dropped thoughtfully to the tip of his cigar, glowing like the ruby in his necktie. Dodalus took a deep breath, drew a big silk handkerchief, scattering perfume from its folds, and mopped his forehead. He poked the handkerchief into his outside breast pocket, leaving it to overflow generously. Sweat continued to break out on the wide, greasy face.

Nimble fingers to the left of Everhard shuffled, offered the cut, got it and dealt. Everhard let his cards lie untouched. Other men picked up theirs and began sorting.

"You know, it is a little hard on the eyes, this light," said Everhard, glancing overhead.

He reached into an inside coat pocket.

Dodalus, slowly blowing smoke, suddenly jerked his foot from the chair and puffed as if struck full in the stomach. Five men staringly held their breath as Everhard, with a preoccupied air, took out a pair of greenish blue glasses, wiped the lenses carefully and hooked them

over his ears. Not a man at the table moved. Frozen, they sat in startled attitudes. Dodalus drew deeply on his big cigar. No flicker crossed his heavily lidded eyes.

Everhard did not pick up his cards. He left them face down, spreading them with quick little touches and, since their backs were plainly marked with gambler's ink that any one with special glasses could read, he sorted a pair of sevens and with no glance at the face of the cards, tossed the discards aside.

The tinhorns[3] sneaked bewildered glances, one at another. One fellow cleared his throat, as if he were about to speak. Everhard removed the glasses and looked at him attentively. The fellow changed his mind and said nothing. The Turk slowly took off his glasses and, with a kind of furtive slowness, put them into a pocket. Another man dropped his cigaret. It had burned down to his fingers. The Turk twisted about and gave Dodalus a look that asked for help.

Everhard stood up. With a backward thrust of his leg he moved the heavy chair. The fingertips of his left hand were lightly on the table. His right hand hovered, breast high, as yet not with menace but poised within a half second's reach of the automatic. His voice was quiet; the words had no particular emphasis:

"Pay me. Sixty thousand francs."

Dodalus laughed nervously, eyeing the baffled gamblers. Leaning far over, with a labored reach of his fat body, he opened the door. Then facing them, he gave his arm a sweep.

"Get out, you—all you! I'll settle with Mr. Richmond."

His accent was more muddled than ever. Sweat ran and dripped like raindrops.

The gamblers gave one another furtive, questioning glances, but stood up, pushing half heartedly at their chairs.

"You heard me!" Everhard's look nailed the Turk banker. "Leave sixty thousand francs on this table. I'd take your shirt too, but there are some stinks a laundry can't get out!"

Dodalus' deep voice was humbly coaxing—

"I'll settle with you, Mr. Richmond."

"Right. But when I win, I collect. From everybody in the game."

The Turk uneasily paused, eyeing Everhard. He then reached into his pocket, flung a handful of crumpled notes at the table, jerked himself about as if in a huff and started to follow the others.

Everhard stopped him.

"Wait till I count this money."

The Turk stopped, glaring at Dodalus, who made a deprecating little gesture with the cigar.

"Get out," said Everhard.

The Turk went. Dodalus gave the door a swing, slamming it closed.

Everhard smoothed the notes, carefully folding them. Dodalus opened his mouth and closed it without a sound. Everhard did not look at him, being busy with the notes. Dodalus threw away the cigar and, mopping his face and neck with the handful of wadded silk handkerchief, walked to the other side of the table. Facing across it, he said:

"I've been an ass. Name your price."

Everhard looked him over, eyed the ruby in the necktie. His eyes wandered about Dodalus' fingers. Fine diamonds. His glance lifted to Dodalus' eyes, doglike, limpid. Fine eyes. Everhard said nothing. He had a way of saying nothing most uncomfortably.

"Honest to God, Mr. Richmond, I'd repaid what you lost!"

"Never heard that one before."

"You see—honest, Mr. Richmond, it—it was a kind of joke!" Dodalus grunted unhappily.

"Why try to frame me with parlor magic!"

TO BE CONTINUED

By MALCOLM WHEELER-NICHOLSON

The ROAD *without* TURNING

THE two men were somewhat similar in appearance, both being rangy in build and tall. But the German looked like a professional soldier. Kurt von Kelnitz always sat erect in his chair and wore his field gray as though he had been poured into it. On the other hand the Britisher, behind the desk, slouched in his khaki with that elaborate carelessness which gives an English officer the air of having only recently donned the uniform and of being willing to doff it as quickly.

"What a heavy footed fellow that sentry is," complained Von Kelnitz, breaking the silence.

The British officer nodded, and the two of them listened, their faces turned toward the corridor just beyond the door. Out there a sentinel walked steadily. His footfalls receded thirty paces down the hall, where he made an about-face and returned, the solid clump of his boots growing steadily louder until he passed the door.

From the courtyard at the far end of the corridor there came the crash of grounded arms and the staccato chal-

lenge and reply as the midnight guard went through the centuries-old custom of the Transfer of the Keys. Both men glanced at the clock, the British officer furtively, the German calmly.

Again that oppressive silence fell between them. It was broken only by the sound of the scratching of the pen as the German officer finished his letter. At last he signed it, folded it and placed it within the envelop, writing the address in precise fashion. His face impassive, he handed it to the British officer.

"You will see that it reaches her, Dick?" he asked.

"Of course," said the Britisher hastily and placed the letter on the desk with a trace of awkwardness.

The German glanced about the small stone-walled room.

"It's a picturesque old place, this Tower of London," he said, and there came a glint of amusement into his eyes. "Picturesque, ancient and outmoded, like your creaky old British Empire, Dick."

The Englishman, Major Richard Fortescue, smiled at the sally.

"Remember, Kurt, before the war, at the Embassy in Berlin, that big argument we had concerning the relative potency of schnapps and Scotch whisky?" he countered.

The German officer removed the monocle from his eye and twisted it about between finger and thumb.

"Will I ever forget the headache that next morning! *Ach! Du lieber Gott!* It felt as though it had been hit by a battering ram, that head."

"You were a *Leutnant* of Uhlans then, Kurt, and a bachelor. It must have been after I left that you married. Tell me, were you married before or after the war?"

"Before the war," responded the German. "We were married secretly, for I did not have the permission of his Majesty."

The British officer glanced down at the envelop on his desk.

"She was French, was she not?"

"Yes, she was. We met in Berlin, while she was visiting distant relatives. I fell madly in love with her, finally persuading her to marry me. She had no immediate relatives except a younger brother, and so there wasn't *that* kind of interference."

"In spite of that, it must have been a little complicated," said the Britisher. "How about your corps of officers? Tell me about it and tell me what happened to you at the outbreak of war."

The British officer handed him his cigar case, from which the German selected and lighted one, bowing from the waist in thanks. After carefully clipping the cigar with a small gold clip attached to his watchchain, he lighted it and took a long puff before replying.

"As you say, Dick, the marriage was a little complicated. I ran the risk of a court-martial for marrying without the permission of the Kaiser. I also risked the displeasure of the corps of officers for selecting a wife from what was soon to be an enemy country. But that was not all."

The German flicked the white ash from the end of his cigar and stared reflectively at the end of the glowing tip. Major Fortescue glanced in furtive fashion at the clock, looking quickly away again. He cleared his throat nervously.

"Tell me about it, Kurt, from the beginning. You have never told me your experiences at the commencement of the war, and I have often wondered if you found an opportunity to get into action with your Uhlans."

Kurt von Kelnitz needed little urging.

Yes, it had been a little complicated, that marriage. At first the girl was none too willing to hurry things, and there were legal formalities to be gone through. But they were married quietly out at one of Berlin's suburbs just before the girl returned to France.

At the time there was much talk of war between their countries. He had received several letters from her until the war situation grew more tense and it

was forbidden to correspond. Thereafter he did not hear from her. Yes, he had led his Uhlans into battle.

His regiment was one of the first to be ordered to the frontier and was sent up to the north.

He felt exceedingly joyous that day, and when word came at last, ordering them across the frontier, his men cheered loudly for the Fatherland and the Kaiser. They crossed over with the entire regiment singing.

Kurt was only a *Leutnant* then, but he had absolute confidence in his platoon of some twenty-four lances. They carried the tubular steel lance and wore the flat topped, black leather *Schapka,* the distinctive Uhlan headgear. They were well mounted, his men, on sleek Hanoverian horses, standing fifteen two hands high, the least of them. The cavalry orders were to work in cooperation with the machine guns and the armored motor cars. This he did not like so well, for he wanted opportunity to lead his platoon thundering gloriously against the enemy.

For the first few kilometers they saw no sign of the French. They reasoned that the enemy forces had been withdrawn from the frontier.

Kurt's platoon was flung out as a scouting force in advance. He trotted them along the road and through the woods, passing through the cobbled streets of gray stone villages whose inhabitants remained concealed behind shuttered windows. Despite his light heartedness and the thrilling sense of adventure that possessed him, the silence and the deserted appearance of the countryside began to oppress him as something slightly sinister.

Moreover, he was worried about his wife. Somewhere along the line upon which he was marching lay the château of Sevrey-sur-Aisne, where "Mademoiselle" Odette de Sevrey lived with her younger brother, Vicomte de Sevrey, whom Kurt had never met. It had been weeks since he had received a letter from her, since the war situation had become menacing. Naturally enough, he was worried and anxious to see her again.

What troubled Kurt more than the silence from his wife was the fact that the château of Sevrey-sur-Aisne lay right in the path of the enormous German thrust toward Paris.

So much, however, was Kurt the soldier that, despite his personal feelings, he could not help but thrill to the realization that he was an integral part of that thrust. To his right and left, as far as he could see, squadrons were breaking out of the woods and crossing the fields and sweeping onward in a wave of horsemen. Behind him the earth trembled to the tramp of hordes of infantry and reverberated to the clank and heave of great guns. *Der Tag* had arrived and the Fatherland was on the march!

SOME eight kilometers behind the frontier they had their first brush with the enemy. His *Feldwebel* called his attention to the farmyard ahead of them at the turn of the road.

"If it is permitted to speak, *Herr Leutnant—*" the slow spoken Bavarian pointed to the farmyard. Kurt von Kelnitz signaled a halt.

"Speak up, and be quick about it!" Kurt barked impatiently.

"*Herr Leutnant,* truly—I think—it seems there are enemy soldiers in that farmyard!"

Scarcely had the words left the *Feldwebel's* lips when something pinged viciously into the bark of a tree near at hand and in another second they heard the crack of a rifle. The *Leutnant* drove his platoon to the shelter of the trees on the side of the road and rode forward himself to reconnoiter, keeping close to the edge of the woods. The *Feldwebel* had spoken truly, for now Kurt could see men in blue coats and red breeches moving about the barnyard.

He watched the spurt of dust from the muzzles of the rifles they were firing.

He turned to give orders to his platoon when he heard the clank and creak of machine gun carts coming up the road behind him. Their commander, a fat and pimpled officer, came trotting up. The officer was not too fat, however, to make quick work of getting his guns into action, and in a few seconds two Maxims were chattering from the edge of the woods and the red trousered enemy had disappeared from view.

Taking advantage of the situation, Von Kelnitz galloped his platoon across the intervening space in open order and arrived at the farmyard to find three or four dead and several wounded Frenchmen. It was his first sight of enemy casualties and he rode on sobered by the view.

He noted on his map that the road he was following would eventually take him within two or three kilometers of the Château de Sevrey-sur-Aisne. His platoon was well out on the right of the regimental patrol sector. Upon climbing a hill he saw, still farther to the right, a platoon of the Death's Head Hussars in their gray fur busbies. He waved to their officer and received a punctilious salute in reply. They were lighter men on lighter horses, those Hussars, and personally he was of the opinion that his own husky Uhlans could account for twice their number of Hussars—which is what a young officer should think.

In the late afternoon an action developed somewhere off at the left. Then for the first time he heard the thud and smash of the artillery in action. He found his men listening gravely to the sound, all of them soberly elated. A few minutes later, after throwing out pickets, he halted the platoon and watered horses at an inn whose frightened landlord served his men with good red wine and bread which they ate and drank with their sausage. The fighting on the left died down. Toward dusk there were sporadic bursts of rifle fire, but distant and of no consequence.

That night they bivouacked in an abandoned mill and fed their horses from sacks of grain. The *Leutnant* inspected his outposts between dawn and daylight. He had placed four double sentry posts on duty—one outside the mill, one to the right of the village, one to the left, the fourth one in front at the edge of the woods. Toward morning he heard the rumble of heavy gunfire from the north. Stopping to listen to this for a moment, he continued his inspection.

It was when he was approaching the outpost to the right of the village that he was brought up short by a sharp challenge:

"*Wer da?*" growled the sentry, and Kurt heard the snick of a breech bolt.

He had placed no sentry here and, after identifying himself, he strode up to the man. It was Private Klimtsig of the third section.

"What are you running around all over the place for, you fool?" he stormed.

"But, *Herr Leutnant—*" stammered Klimtsig—"but there is something wrong at the post at the edge of the woods. I heard a groan come from there and they do not answer when we call."

Wasting no further words on the sentry, the *Leutnant* drew his Luger and ran toward the point. It was dark at the edge of the woods and he snapped his flashlight. Its beam showed him two bodies sprawled on the ground. The two Uhlans, Shultz and Willer, with their throats cut from ear to ear. Their weapons were gone.

The platoon was ominously silent when they heard the news. After burying their comrades the next morning they went on with a new spirit of hatred among them. Plainly, reasoned the *Leutnant,* it had been the work of Frenchmen of the same type as those armed civilians who had prowled about the armies of 1870. The *Leutnant* registered a vow that it would go badly with any civilians whom he found with weapons in their hands.

With a few brushes with a small patrol of enemy cavalry to enliven the next

day, they continued on, dropping back once into the regimental support and being sent forward again. The fighting now grew heavier in the north and raged all of one day and far into the night. Word finally came that the French and English had been driven back.

"Did you run into any English patrols?" asked Major Fortescue, interrupting the German officer's even toned recital of his experiences.

"Not then, Dick, but several days later," replied Kurt von Kelnitz, listening to the clatter outside in the corridor as the sentinel was changed, and continuing his story as the receding clump of the heavy booted, relieving detachment diminished down the corridor and lost itself in the courtyard. The German glanced at the clock, noting that it was 2 A. M., at which time the second relief went on post in most armies.

NO, HE had not seen any British troopers, but he had heard that the Death's Head Hussars at his right had had a brush with a squadron of British Dragoons in which the honors were about evenly divided; they both drew swords and charged, coming to collision in the middle of the village street.

About this time the *Leutnant* was growing anxious for a sight of that château which sheltered his wife. Fortunately, his regiment shifted its sector toward the right, and at last he found himself leading his platoon to the Aisne River, crossing below the village and the Château de Sevrey-sur-Aisne.

Several kilometers away he saw the tall, gray stone towers of the château, with their conical pointed roofs rising above the village. His heart skipped a beat or two as he gazed upon the roof that sheltered his beloved. He was riding at the time through a scattering of houses at the edge of a stone quarry on the far bank of the Aisne. His scouts were well forward and to the flank, but as he passed the mouth of the quarry he heard the crack of a rifle from the edge of the woods to the right of the road, not three hundred meters away.

Almost simultaneously with the rifle's crack he heard a grunt behind him and turned to find his *Feldwebel* staring stupidly at his right side. Something dark was spreading over the man's tunic.

"If it is permitted to speak—*Herr—Leutnant—*" coughed the *Feldwebel*, and suddenly with a horrified look in his eyes the poor fellow swayed out of his saddle and slumped heavily to the ground.

His horse snorted and reared aside. Some one caught the frightened animal while the *Leutnant* drew his Luger automatic and, waving to his men to follow, galloped toward the point whence the shot had come. His men crashed into the trees on either side of him as he rode through. There was no trace of any one in the woods and no sign of a living thing until he leaped his horse out on the far side of the woods at the edge of a slightly sunken road which bordered the field.

Here he came upon three of his men surrounding a young Frenchman with a bicycle. As the *Leutnant* arrived, one of the Uhlans stabbed at the youth with his lance, but the young Frenchman warded off the blow by catching the steel point in the spokes of his rear wheel. At the *Leutnant's* shout the Uhlans gave back and one of them dismounted quickly and searched the Frenchman. There was no weapon upon him.

The other Uhlans rode in, reporting that they had found nothing. He'd hidden it well somewhere, no doubt. Suddenly the memory of that agonized look in the *Feldwebel's* eyes rose up in the *Leutnant's* mind. With it came that memory of the sight of his two Uhlans with their throats cut. Something like a red mist enveloped him and he felt his temples throbbing. As from a distance he heard his voice issuing commands.

A section of the Uhlans dismounted swiftly, dragging their carbines from

their boots. An *Unteroffizier* was binding the youth's hands behind him and backing him against a tree. There was something unreal and dream-like about the whole thing. The *Leutnant* found the eyes of the young Frenchman fixed upon him with something a little proud and a little contemptuous in their depths. There was no sign of fear or cringing as the section of Uhlans lined up with their rifles. The young Frenchman looked up at the sky and around at the trees. The *Leutnant* remembered, strangely enough, the beauty of that Summer afternoon and knew what the man before him was thinking.

It was all over so swiftly that the *Leutnant* scarcely knew what had happened and he stared rather stupidly at the huddled body at the foot of the tree and felt his eardrums still ringing to the crash of the volley. Like some detached spectator, he watched while the *Unteroffizier* placed his pistol to the ear of the fallen youth and fired the "mercy shot".

Mechanically Kurt von Kelnitz reached for the articles the *Unteroffizier* had removed from the pockets of the slain youth. There were three or four letters, a small leather covered notebook, a sterling silver cigaret case with some design upon it and a monogrammed handkerchief.

Leaving the body to lie where it fell, he led his men back to the road again and resumed his march toward the river crossing.

He was still in a daze from the swiftness of the tragedy he had just witnessed, but was suddenly brought back alertly to the present by the crackle of rifle fire from the far side of the bridge just ahead. Halting his platoon, he waited for his scouts to gallop in. They came, reporting a small enemy force on the far side of the bridge in an old factory building.

The fire grew hotter as he listened. Another one of his scouts rode in, reporting that the two men and horses on the point of the advance group had been killed and were lying on the approach to the bridge.

Dismounting his Uhlans, he led them forward behind the shelter of some piles of firewood and gave them order to fire. Scarcely had their carbines begun to bark when the return fire from the enemy broke out along the far bank and back among the houses. Such strength did it develop that he shortly gave the order to cease firing and withdrew his force from its exposed position.

Back among his horses he drew forth his map and carefully plotted the coordinates of the enemy position across the river and wrote them down on a message blank, being careful, however, to delimit the area so as to exclude the château. This done he wrote a message in two copies, tore it from his notebook and dispatched two messengers.

Across the river the rifle fire died down and the area gave signs of being evacuated by the enemy. Normally he would have followed up with his platoon, but the messages he had sent made this impossible and he was forced to wait.

It was nearly twenty minutes before he heard the sound for which he waited, the deep toned barking of fieldpieces far to the rear. This was succeeded by the sound of the passage of swiftly hurrying missiles in the air overhead and the boom and crash of exploding shells on the luckless village across the river.

It moved like clockwork, that barrage, sweeping with steel fingers from the river's edge up through the village to the edge of the hill whereon rested the château. All in between those limits was a churning inferno of riven stone and shattering steel and quick rising clouds of dust and torn timbers. That deluge of steel rained out of the sky for thirty pitiless minutes and then ceased as abruptly as it had started. It was as simple as turning off the spray of a garden hose.

Heading his platoon, he rode over the bridge and stared in wonder at the smashed village. Roofs sagged crazily

and houses leered drunkenly through what was left of windows and doors, while the street was pitted with shell holes and cluttered with beams and fragments of building stone. Over the whole desolation a heavy dust hung suspended in the still air, while from several half obliterated buildings tongues of flame licked out and spewed forth clouds of smoke which cast a pall over the scene. Here and there bodies lay amid the wreckage, but there were few of these. Evidently the inhabitants had vacated the place before the bombardment had started.

PICKING his way carefully through the débris, he led his platoon up the hill toward the château and arrived to find the great iron gates locked and bolted. Two carved stone lions stared down indifferently. Peering through the iron bars, he could see people scurrying here and there beyond the moat. There seemed to be many people about, both in the courtyard and in the park, for he could see past the angle of the nearest tower, down into the park, whose green of lawn and massed trees was relieved here and there by the white marble of graceful statues.

One of his men hammered on the gate with his lance butt, demanding admission, until a white faced and trembling concierge nervously unlocked and flung wide the iron portals.

The *Leutnant* rode in first, looking eagerly around the courtyard and at the long windows, hoping to catch sight of his wife, but the people he had seen had disappeared by now and there was no one in view except a nervous servant who stood by the great door in livery and knee breeches.

The *Leutnant* paid no attention to this man, but dismounted and strode through the entrance hall, carrying his saber under his arm.

It was a stately hall in which he found himself, with its white marble staircase stretching up to the right and great doors opening into a marble floored salon on the left. He caught an instant glimpse of portraits and statues lining the walls before he heard a light footstep on the stairs.

Turning about, he looked up and saw his wife standing there above him. He took a single quick step forward, his hands outstretched, but dropped them to his sides and stood very straight as she came slowly down the last few steps and stood before him. Clicking his heels and bowing low from the waist, he waited for her to speak.

"I had thought, Kurt, to welcome you to the château under happier circumstances than these," she said. Her voice was low and full of pain.

"This war that has come between our countries," he said, "is there any reason that it should come between us?" But she made no reply to this, only swayed a little on her feet as though feeling faint.

Then came a clatter and a racket in the courtyard, and he stood to attention and saluted as several staff officers and the brigade-general strode briskly in.

His squadron was assigned to guard this headquarters and for the next few days he was on duty at the château. It was after his arrival that the first check to the German advance had come With victory almost in their grasp, the German army had been held from the prize. And all due to the stupidity of one man, that fool of a *Leutnant-general.*

"Against stupidity even the gods themselves fight in vain," Kurt quoted. Yes, so it was.

At any rate the lull gave him time to see his wife and to attempt to win her to his way of thinking. She was horribly distressed, for her younger brother whom she adored had disappeared the day the Uhlans had arrived. She was distraught with worry over this and his task was to attempt to comfort her on this score and to prevail upon her to leave this war torn area. For, as he had told her, the château was doomed

and there was no safety for her in France, for the armies of the war lord were invincible. To the suggestion that she travel to his own home in Germany she demurred hotly, having no wish to be a lonely French woman amid hostile Germans.

They compromised at last upon Switzerland.

She was extremely downcast at the prospect of leaving the château, for she was the *chatelaine* and in obedience to age old custom the people of the surrounding farms and villages had sought sanctuary behind the medieval walls of this old stronghold. Because of this she had remained at her post alone, her brother having disappeared on the approach of the Uhlans.

Altogether it was a very sad time, this strange honeymoon of theirs with the war between their two countries to sadden them and the uncertain future making them anxious. And in addition to these things the thought of her brother was on her mind day and night.

"He is a little wild, is Raoul," she told Kurt, "but I have been a foster mother to him. Please try to find a trace of him and send word to me immediately that you hear anything."

There was little time left. Orders came, sending his squadron once more upon the march. That night the officers gave them a banquet in the great hall and many deep toned German toasts were drunk to the pale and none too happy looking bride.

It was a strange banquet, by candlelight in the marble hall, with the faces of her ancestors staring down from the walls in grim disapproval, and the officers of the staff and of the regiment massed in their alien uniforms.

"And your colonel and your officer corps, they made no objection, Kurt?" asked the Englishman curiously.

"No—" the German shook his head—"she was very beautiful and *that* they understood," he answered; and then he added, "Also, she is of high and noble family."

The time was short, for the regiment was to march at midnight. He said goodby to her from the saddle two hours later and rode into the darkness, leaving her behind with her promise that she would make her way to Paris and from there to Switzerland. She would write to him.

And write she did, for her letters came to him down in front of Amiens and out to East Prussia, where he was sent for several exciting months, and back again to the solemn corridors of the Greater General Staff building in Berlin, where he was put in the intelligence section.

It was known to his chiefs that he had spent many years in England and it was evident that he looked more English than German and could pass anywhere for an upper class Britisher. These things made it almost foreordained that he should be picked for important espionage duty when the time should arise and the need become great.

And that need became great a month or two before the Battle of Cambrai. Word had filtered through to the Greater General Staff that the British were experimenting with some new instrument of war. Increasing reports of this came in, but there was no knowledge as to what form this new instrument would take. And to be forewarned is to be forearmed.

Three higher officers, one after the other, had failed to discover any information of these new instruments until at last one day the *Leutnant*, now promoted to *Rittmeister*, was called in by the chief of his bureau and given orders to prepare to go in disguise and find out what was behind these rumors.

"My word," interrupted the British officer, "you had rumors about the tanks that far ahead?"

"Surely," returned Kurt von Kelnitz, selecting a fresh cigar.

There was during this pause the tramp of feet in the corridor and the eyes of the British officer slid quickly around to the clock again. The German officer stared at it as well, noticing sub-

consciously that it was 4 A.M, the time for the third relief to go on post. There was the clatter of grounded arms, the low question and answer of the relieved and the relieving sentinel, the crisp orders of the corporal of the guard, and the old relief marched away while the new sentinel began his unhurried, steady footed march up and down the corridor.

The German officer lighted his cigar, then continued his story:

It was to find out about those infernal tanks that he, a baron and a *Rittmeister* of a proud regiment of Uhlans was to be sent forth like any common spy. And here Kurt von Kelnitz quoted a sonorous German saying: "Forward you must go, for backward you can no longer turn."

Besides that, his duty was to obey orders and it was for the Fatherland. Moreover, and here was a grain of satisfaction, his designated route led him through Switzerland. He would have opportunity to spend a few days with his bride.

He had clicked his heels, saluted and gone forth to make his preparations. Two days later he was with his wife. *Ach,* the loveliness of those four days by the lake!

[Kurt von Kelnitz quoted Schiller and became absent minded until the ash of his cigar dropped to his knee and brought him back to the present.]

She was beautiful and gracious and lovely and those few hours stolen from the war passed all too quickly. With her he left his suitcase containing his uniform and his decorations, all except one —the *Ordre pour le Mérite* which he wore on a ribbon around his neck.

"Kurt, you didn't tell me that you had won the *Ordre pour le Mérite,*" interrupted Major Fortescue.

"Surely, and placed around my neck by his Majesty himself," answered the German composedly, and went on with his story, neglecting to state how he had won the highest decoration that a German officer can receive.

HIS wife clung to him on his departure from Switzerland, making him promise to write frequently; and he gave his word of honor as a German officer to write at least once a week. He was provided by his chiefs with an American passport under the name of Thomas Spaulding and it was agreed between them that he should write his letters to her addressed Mrs. Thomas Spaulding, Geneva. There was little difficulty in getting out of Switzerland and into France, for the German "underground railway" was extremely efficient.

He spent a day idling on the boulevards of Paris, sitting at the Café de la Paix where two or three people chatted with him of seemingly inconsequential matters before he departed for Boulogne. He underwent a rigorous examination from both British and French authorities at Boulogne, but his papers were perfect and there was little suspicion attached to traveling Americans at this time.

So complete had been the preparations made for him that his English accent was ascribed to Boston and he was provided with a fraternity pin and letters which purported to show that he was a graduate of Harvard.

Upon arrival in London he got in touch immediately with the chief of the German espionage system in Great Britain and lunched openly with him at Berkeley's and dined and danced with one of his assistants, a very beautiful woman, at the Savoy and the Cecil. It was at the former place that he had a narrow escape when one of the big footmen in knee breeches and silk stockings showed signs of recognizing him.

In spite of the fact that in former days he had handed the footman many a shilling tip in exchange for his hat and stick, he managed to look through and beyond the fellow with an assumption of indifference that seemed to convince the footman that he had made a mistake. After that close shave Von Kelnitz, who was now Mr. Thomas Spaulding of Boston, U. S. A, ran no further

risks of that nature by appearing at his former haunts.

It was after his third or fourth day in London that a vague uneasiness began to descend upon him and he found himself filled with a species of jumpy, nervous watchfulness for which he could not account. He feared that it was some sixth sense trying to warn him that he had been discovered and was being watched. It was nothing tangible, but there constantly grew on him the feeling that he was being shadowed. He sought to shake it off by changing lodgings and for a few hours would succeed in finding a little surcease from the nervous strain only to have it recur.

He took to glancing behind him as he walked through the crowded streets, but in no case was he able to pick out any one individual who seemed to be shadowing him. While he was in London the chief of the German espionage service in Great Britain informed him that three of his most trusted agents had been arrested and removed within the past week. This did not operate to increase Kurt's store of confidence and he found himself growing heartily sick of his task, anxious to be done with it. Many and many a time he sighed for the cheerful jingle and steady thud of his squadron of Uhlans trotting behind him.

He waited anxiously for a letter from his wife in response to his own letter informing her that he had arrived safely. Her letter came at last, but it did not succeed in improving his spirits, for to his mind it sounded a little strained and cold and perfunctory. It might have been, he reasoned, that his soul was too filled with anxiety, too overburdened with the anguish of loneliness and worry for any letter from her to succeed in cheering him up and he might have been oversensitive. But at any rate he was more oppressed after her letters than before.

After all, for a man like him, accustomed to the gatherings of his gay fellow officers, it was a harsh fate to be out here alone on a dangerous mission in which discovery would mean an inglorious end at the hands of a firing squad.

Another letter from her came before he left London and this was couched in the same strained and perfunctory fashion. He grew a little alarmed and wondered what might have happened to chill her. In casting over possibilities the thought of that German uniform he had left in her charge returned to plague him. It occurred to him that she might have found something in the pockets that had upset her. But he had little time to speculate on these matters, for the information he had been seeking had come in volume enough to permit him to make his next move.

In other words, he had found out that the strange new weapons of war, which had been rumored, were actually in being and were reported present somewhere on Salisbury Plain. It was said that they were being tried out there behind a great wall of secrecy and heavy cordons of guards. There was nothing for him to do then but to go to Salisbury Plain and attempt to discover the secret.

He made his preparations very carefully, walking from his quarters with stick and gloves as though taking a stroll. Thereafter he rode in a tram for many squares, to alight and dart away in a taxicab. He ordered the driver to take him to the Whitechapel district, where he circled about and pursued a devious route until he was certain that any pursuer must be thrown off his scent. He finally paid off his driver, worked his way through a rabbit warren of streets and hailed another taxicab, which deposited him near the point where his own motor car with a trusted driver was awaiting him.

They slid out of London after dark, speeding toward Salisbury Plain at a good forty miles an hour. It was after they were well out of the glare of the city lights that he first noticed the headlights of that car which followed him so persistently. Mile after mile it followed behind him until at last he ordered his chauffeur to turn out his light and dart

down a side road.

Obedient, the chauffeur did as he was directed and they fled along a country lane and made a detour of many miles between high hedges before they came again to the main highway. He looked back as they struck the main road and relaxed with a sigh of relief as he saw no sign of those annoying headlights.

But his relief was short lived. They had made scarcely a quarter of a mile when he noted a deeper shadow on the side of the road. Turning to watch it, he saw it moving silently along behind them. His pursuers had simply waited with lights out at the road junction of the most likely turn into the main road.

He confessed that something like an icy hand closed over his heart as he saw that relentless black shadow speeding along behind him, but "he must keep going forward for he could no longer turn back."

THAT infernal following car stuck closer than a brother. They were getting too uncomfortably near to Salisbury Plain now to permit of anything going wrong. Luckily the car with which Von Kelnitz was provided was a fast one; he needed every bit of speed he could manage for the next few minutes. Selecting a convenient turn in the road, he ordered the chauffeur to drive the car at the highest speed of which it was capable. Accordingly it shot down that length of road and around another turn at over a mile a minute.

Before the other car had a chance to pick up speed they managed to increase the distance to over three times what it had been. Meanwhile Von Kelnitz gathered his possessions together and clung on the runningboard. Again they rounded a turn.

"Now slow up!" he called, and the car was throttled down to a safe speed.

"Go like the devil as quickly as I jump!" he commanded.

He leaped out and rolled down a convenient bank while his car gathered speed and disappeared in the darkness ahead. Crouching there in the shadows of the embankment, he heard the following car thunder by overhead. After a safe interval of time had passed he arose, shook the gravel and dust out of his clothing and struck into a copse nearby. Here he unrolled his bundle and changed his clothing in the dark, hiding his neat tailored suit under a log and dressing himself in rough workman's clothing.

With a smear or two of grease on his face, with his hair rumpled up and with a soiled neckerchief knotted about his throat he was changed into a British navvy. His costume was complete even to a rough stick and a half empty bottle of liquor in one coat pocket and some bread and cheese wrapped in a newspaper in the other.

Thus disguised, he struck out for the nearest village. That night he slept in a straw pile on the outskirts of the village. The next morning he entered the village pub and, flinging a shilling or two on the bar, demanded bloaters and tea in excellent cockney dialect. Here he posed as a working man seeking employment, confessing boldly that he had drunk himself out of his last job.

This was all in keeping with the rôle he had assumed and the innkeeper and his servant and two or three hangers-on in the bar accepted him for what he was, treating him with the instinctive caution of villagers to the stranger within their midst. This was well enough, and he ate his meager breakfast in more or less comfort, considerably excited within himself at the nearness of his goal and the great prize in the way of information that lay so close.

All went well and he found himself feeling secure enough, until, happening to glance out of the window, he noticed the keeper of the pub in shirt sleeves and apron leaning against the gate, deep in conversation with a constable who had ridden up on a bicycle. As the two talked together Von Kelnitz saw the keeper of the pub jerk his head back

toward the bar, pointing his thumb over his shoulder at the same time. The policeman leaned his bicycle against the hedge and came on up the path.

The rough looking navvy sprawled at the side of the table felt a clutch of fear go through him as the man entered the doorway and stared him up and down. He bore the scrutiny without flinching as far as any outward sign appeared, but inwardly he felt hot and cold chills run up and down his spine. It seemed an eternity before at last the policeman strolled toward him.

"Look 'ere, my man," said the policeman. "'Oo are you an' wot are you a-doin' of in these parts?"

"Wot am Hi a-doin' of?" answered the navvy in honest indignation. "Carn't yer see wot Hi'm a-doin' of? My nyme's Halfred 'Iggins—"

"Well, 'Iggins, 'ow about showin' me some hidentification pypers?"

"Blimey! 'As it got to the pass where a honest workin' man carn't go abort a-lookin' fer a job without bein' held up by hevery hamateur polyceman along the road? What pypers d'ye want to be lookin' at? 'Ere they are. Look 'em over while Hi finish my meal."

So saying, the navvy handed over several greasy papers, treating the policeman with lofty indifference as that official glanced through them. The navvy munched solemnly at his breakfast until his well worn papers, which included among them a food card giving his local habitation and his name, were read through by the newcomer.

The German espionage system was nothing if not thorough. The policeman read the papers through laboriously and finally handed them back with a grunt.

"But look 'ere, my man, you'd best not be seen loafing about this district. Wot with the work bein' done by the military on Salisbury Plain stryngers aren't welcome. So finish yer breakfast and be on yer way."

"Right-o," returned the navvy cheerily.

But after leaving the village he circled back to the road again and kept on his way toward the plain. All that afternoon he lay up in a group of trees by the side of the road and watched heavily laden motor lorries go by. After dark they still continued to come and he crept nearer the road, watching for one that would be sufficiently slow for him to scramble aboard. At last his opportunity came—a huge lorry whose sides and top were covered with canvas. He swung himself up on the tail gate and down inside. He found the floor covered with bales of burlap sacking. Several of these bales were broken and he managed to conceal himself among the loose sacks. The motor lorry jerked and clanked along for what seemed to be an interminable length of time, but at last it drew up and lanterns flashed about it.

The rays of light from one of these fell on the interior of the truck and some one, whom Von Kelnitz judged to be a soldier, stuck his head in and made a perfunctory inspection. Then permission to go on was given and Von Kelnitz sighed thankfully as the machine resumed its progress. He felt it being backed into some sort of shed. The driver departed.

Pushing the sacks aside, Von Kelnitz rose and peered through the curtains, finding that his truck was one of a long row of military lorries parked in a huge shed. A sentinel appeared every five minutes or so, making his rounds, but Von Kelnitz figured out his posts and the time it took him to cover them and slipped across the opening of the shed and into the dark shadows on the far side.

There were more sheds to the right and left and directly ahead of him were great piles of forage covered with canvas. Moving along in the shadow of these, he worked along the line of buildings until he came to a group that was more strongly guarded and brilliantly lighted.

It was impossible to get by this cordon of sentries, but here, he reasoned, must be sheltered those secret machines

which he had come to discover. There was little of the night left him by now, and he sought for shelter and a hiding place for the day. This he found in a pile of forage. He climbed up and under the canvas, arranging a place where he would be able to see the entrance of those strongly guarded buildings.

There he slept until he was aroused by a great clanking, roaring sound and awoke to find it was broad daylight.

FROM this concealed observation he thrilled at the sight of his first tank, a huge, oblong, steel box on peculiar caterpillar treads that came lurching and grinding out of the shed in front of him and waddled off across the field. It was followed by another and another until the air was heavy with the gas from their exhausts.

As each one passed he made a mental note of some fresh characteristic until as the last one waddled out of sight he had an accurate description of the cumbersome and the deadly looking machines, their armament, their construction and as much as he could gather of their interior arrangement and crews from one that halted and underwent some repairs not thirty yards away.

He was highly elated at his success so far. Here was the jealously guarded British secret which, transmitted to the German High Command, meant a great source of danger removed from the Fatherland. He was too keen a military man not to realize the potentialities of those great armored beasts and the overwhelming effect they would have upon startled infantry.

The next step was to get away with his information and send it to Berlin as quickly as possible. There was no hope of getting out of there before dark. He observed that practically every one was in uniform and even the workmen wore military overalls and seemed to be soldier mechanics.

All that day he lay stretched out under the canvas, cold and hungry and thirsty but borne up by the knowledge indelibly imprinted upon his brain. Night came at last and he stole from shadow to shadow, slipping through an inner line of guards by crawling on his stomach and coming at last to the outer line. Here he found barbed wire in front of him and worked along it, becoming panicky as he found no means of getting through. At last he came to a small gate guarded by a single sentry. The sentry was none too alert and Von Kelnitz was desperate. The consequence was that the luckless soldier, expecting no trouble from his rear, was suddenly knocked into oblivion and Von Kelnitz found himself outside the barbed wire.

Laying a course as best he could from what he remembered of the countryside, he walked all night until at last, more by good luck than anything else, he struck the main road to London. Not deeming it safe to resume his own costume, he hailed a passing char-à-banc and paid his fare into London.

So successful had he been that he decided to take a chance and made his way boldly toward the small hotel from which he could get in touch with the proper agents for transmitting his important information to Berlin.

As he stepped into the entrance hall of the hotel a heavy hand was dropped on his shoulder. He was swung about and felt the cold steel of handcuffs clicking into place over his wrists . . .

"SO THAT'S my story, Dick," concluded Von Kelnitz, grinding out the remnants of his cigar. "But what puzzles me is how your people captured me so quickly. How soon after my arrival in London did they know of my presence?"

"About two days, Kurt," returned Major Fortescue gravely.

"And you shadowed me every moment thereafter?"

"No, not every moment. I must admit we lost you from the time you left that motor car near Salisbury Plain un-

til the time you hailed that char-à-banc that carried you back to London."

"That char-à-banc had one of your men aboard?" asked the German.

"It had a group of our men aboard. It had been cruising up and down looking for you for twelve hours."

"That was very keen work," said the German admiringly, "but I still can't understand how you pierced my disguse. I was considered very clever."

"Oh, there were any number of ways," returned the Britisher noncommittally.

His eyes were a little haggard as he glanced at the clock. The hour hand pointed to 5 A.M. His ears were strained, listening to a sound which stirred in the courtyard, a sound compounded of the crash of grounded arms and the answering of men to a roll call.

"Yes, Dick," said Kurt von Kelnitz, quietly, "the time is very short. I cannot tell you how I appreciate your kindness in all that you have done for me, especially in sending for my uniform. Do you suppose my wife will understand why I wanted it?"

"I don't believe so, Kurt," said the Britisher gently.

The German nodded, satisfied, and then a slight frown gathered on his forehead.

"Do you know, Dick, that this uniform explained a little to me why my wife's letters seemed strained and perfunctory?"

The Britisher looked up swiftly.

"Yes," continued Von Kelnitz. "I told you, if you remember, that I feared she might find some letters in the pockets. Those letters were in the pocket when I left the uniform with her. And now the letters are no longer there."

"Have you been carrying on an affair with some one else, Kurt?"

The German shook his head gravely.

"No, nothing like that, but those letters and a leather covered notebook I had carried since that day when I ordered the execution of the young Frenchman near the bridge at Sevrey-sur-Aisne. They were the letters and the notebook that were taken from the pockets of the dead man."

The Britisher stared at him.

"You see, Dick, the letters belonged to him and were addressed with his name, and the notebook contained notes in his own handwriting."

"And the name?" asked the Britisher.

"The letters were addressed to the Vicomte Raoul de Sevrey—the brother whom she worshiped."

A silence fell in the room. It was broken at last by Kurt von Kelnitz's voice:

"So you see, Dick, it's pretty much of a mess all around. Never did I mention her brother's death to her, nor the fact that I was instrumental in that death. That she should discover that he had been killed was inevitable, but it was only due to my forgetfulness in leaving his notebook and letters in the pocket of my tunic that told her the whole truth. And so I fear that I am passing out of her life, leaving hatred instead of love behind."

There was pain on his features and the Britisher looked away, his eyes haggard.

Suddenly both men raised their heads. For a second they stared into each other's eyes. There was panic in the eyes of the Britisher; nothing but a cool acceptance of fate in the eyes of the German. A sound was coming from the courtyard. The sound grew in volume and resolved itself into the steady, disciplined tramp of many feet.

The Britisher's face went white. Kurt von Kelnitz nodded quietly to himself.

"You have been good to me, my friend," he said simply and rose as there came an order to halt, then the crash of grounded arms outside the door. "I've only one thing more to ask of you, Dick, and that is that you will send this—" he jerked a ribbon, from which hung a decoration, from the inside of his blouse and laid it on the table—"that you will send my *Ordre pour le Mérite* to Odette. Her address is under the name of Mrs. Thomas Spaulding,

No. 13 Bahnhof Strasse, Geneva. You will do this?"

"Of course, Kurt," whispered the Englishman.

Both men were standing up as the door opened.

"They have come for me," said Kurt von Kelnitz, and extended his hand. The Britisher took it. Of the two he was the more unnerved.

"By God, Kurt—I'm sorry—it's rotten luck. I'd rather—" something like a sob choked his utterance.

"It is nothing, my friend. Forget it. Goodby and thank you." And Kurt von Kelnitz, *Rittmeister* of Uhlans, Baron and *Freiherr* of the Kingdom of Prussia, convicted spy, clicked his heels and bowed stiffly from the waist.

He strode briskly to the door, where an officer, a chaplain and the guard stood ready to conduct him to the firing squad that even now was waiting at an angle of the courtyard wall.

After what seemed an eternity of silence the Britisher flinched as there came the dull sound he had dreaded. For a long time he sat staring at the wall.

"Poor old Kurt! What a beastly business!" he whispered to himself at last.

He reached with a hand that trembled into the drawer of the desk. He brought forth a long official envelop that contained the papers relating to Kurt von Kelnitz. From among these he pulled a faintly scented square of notepaper. It was inscribed in spidery characters. In clear and careful English it denounced Kurt von Kelnitz as a German spy, told the name under which he was hiding and the place where he might be found. The envelop was postmarked Switzerland, the return address was 13 Bahnhof Strasse. It was signed "Odette de Sevrey."

"What a *beastly* mess!" repeated the Britisher, his face haggard, as he drew forth another envelop from the drawer of his desk. "And how rotten sorry she'll be if she ever discovers the truth!"

And again he read that report of the French Sûreté upon the Vicomte Raoul de Sevrey:

"This individual became suspected of treasonable traffic with the Germans shortly before the outbreak of the war. On evidence that he was selling information to pay debts in gambling, to which he was addicted, orders to arrest him were sent to Sevrey-sur-Aisne after the outbreak of hostilities. Evidently he became apprised of these and fled from his domicile. It was reported that he made his escape by exchanging clothing with a French peasant youth. Due to this ruse it was for many months believed that de Sevrey was dead until he was reported in Belgium in the following year. In June of 1916 he was arrested by agents of the Sûreté, tried and convicted of being a spy in German pay. Executed at Fort Vincennes July 30th, 1916, as a traitor to France. Information secret and confidential. Relatives not notified."

The Britisher stared at the coldly official wording of the document.

"*What* a beastly mess!"

Out in the courtyard a man with mop and pail cleaned up some stains. The members of the firing squad, as was the custom, were excused from all other duties for the day.

Strange Adventures of the Newsreel Men —by One of Them

FIRE WALKERS *of* FIJI

By CHARLES PEDEN

NOT so long ago I met a man who bemoaned the encroachment of modern civilization.

"Romance is dead," he wailed. "Everywhere I go in search of local color I am disillusioned. First it was motor cars and native Rotary movements; now it is radios and neon signs twisted into the characters of the mother tongue, be it Japanese, Siamese or Arabic."

To a certain extent he was right. But there still remains plenty of territory for the adventurer to roam. For instance, down below the equator among the islands of the South Pacific one can see much that is strange and primitive. True, most of the natives are Christianized. Yet beyond this they rarely adopt the ways of the white man and they live pretty much as did their predecessors. Wearing as little as necessary, doing as little as possible and caring not a tinker's dam for the morrow.

While combing this area for movietone subjects last Winter, it was only natural that we put in at Suva, Fiji. Situated on Vita Levu, the largest island of the group, it serves as the chief trading center and

capital of Fiji, which is one of Britain's crown colonies. We were enjoying tiffin on the broad terrace of the Grand Pacific Hotel, when the subject of the fire walkers was broached by Sir Henry Gregory, Minister of Native Affairs.

"I say, I rather fancy it would make a jolly fine show for you fellows—this fire walking business," Sir Henry remarked.

"Is it on the level, though?" asked Johnny Tondra, my partner.

"Emphatically," affirmed Michael Greaves, the fourth at our table. "It's a ritual, y'know, and accordin' to the local legend, a gnome, on consideration of his life being spared, conferred upon those particular Johnnies immunity from fire."

"I thought all Fijians did this fire walking," said I.

"Heavens, no!" corrected Greaves. "It's restricted to the bushmen of Bega Island* and they guard the secret jealously. Sort of a superiority thing, y'know. The other tribes stand in awe of them. Few whites ever go over to Bega and, if you decide to do so, you will have to charter a native schooner. Look here, as a matter of fact I'm one of the fortunates who has seen the ceremony and I'd be glad to go along with you. Might be of some aid. What?"

"Done," we agreed.

Things move slowly in the South Seas and we were several days in securing a proper boat for our needs. Movietone equipment is bulky, and along with baskets of food, beakers of water and other necessary impedimenta we had to charter a fairly large schooner. The skipper of the craft—it was called the *Vakananuni*—offered to double as interpreter. His name was Tooita.

"Better maybe we catch tide all go long around eight bells he ring nighttime," was his quaint way of denoting the sailing hour in the typical bêche-de-mer vernacular of all native saltwater men.

Promptly at midnight we were at the pier and, after stowing our duffle aboard, the lines were cast off. In the flickering, yellow light of a lone oil lamp, the *Vakananuni's* crew seemed a sinister lot. They were a polyglot bunch gleaned from everywhere. There were Tongans, New Caledonia boys and even a few brutish looking Solomon Islanders. The majority, however, were Fijians and their woolly hair lent added height to unusually tall physiques. Solemnly, with great round eyes, they studied us and a creepy feeling went up and down my spine at the stares. My mind recalled a monument I had seen up in Massacre Bay, Tutuila, which marks the graves of fifty white men killed by just such a lot.

"Some of these boys are but one generation removed from cannibalism," I thought, "and we wouldn't stand a chance if they decided to mob us."

Even today men delve into the bush lands of the Solomons never to return. The novelty of our presence soon wore off, though, and the crew resumed the staccato jabber of their various dialects.

Greaves, Tondra and I lounged on a pile of canvas topside, preferring this to the cabin which reeked with the pungent odor of dried copra. It was a lovely, balmy night. Overhead the Southern Cross blazed against the deep indigo of a tropic sky and out in the darkness we could hear the booming surf and see its phosphorescent crest as it ripped along a coral reef. One by one the crew dropped off to sleep and we soon joined them, lulled by the lonesome creaky sigh of the boom as it idly swung back and forth.

"Mornin'. It's past eight and the boys are boiling water for our tea. Come along. Let's explore the hamper for some grub."

I looked up sleepily. It was Greaves. We found Johnny already sampling a tin of New Zealand lamb tongues.

"There's our destination," said Michael, nodding ahead.

Through the early morning haze we could see Bega looming up. The smoky profile of its volcanic backbone rose to a height of two thousand-odd feet and the surf crashing against its rocky shores threw spray high into the air, creating

*Pronounced Bennga

a mist that lent a dusty outline to the island.

The deep, mournful note of a conch shell signal reached our ears. Suddenly, a small outrigger canoe shot toward us. Reaching hailing distance, its occupants shouted something to Tooita who in turn answered them. Back to shore they paddled furiously. Upon Tooita's assurance that everything was arranged, we stepped into a small tender and followed. As we neared the beach, I studied the group of natives who were quietly awaiting us. They seemed to be a more noble type of Melanesian and much more primitive, even affecting the ancient *ti* leaf skirt of their fathers. The keel of our dinghy scraped against the pebbly bottom; we jumped out. One particularly imposing native, bearing a straw fly switch, raised it aloft in salute and shouted—

"*Bula bulavo!*"

"THAT is Rata Jone, the head chief, or *buli*, and he is wishing us a long and prosperous life," enlightened Greaves.

"I hope he means it," I muttered as we waded ashore.

Rata Jone seemed a good sort. After proudly showing us around the village, he led the way to the most imposing *pandanos* leaf house and motioned us to enter. Within, after our eyes had become accustomed to the murky gloom, we realized the presence of a score or more fierce looking warriors. Squatting on *lahala* mats and smoking banana leaf cigarets, they eyed us sullenly beneath beetling brows. Heads together, they seemed to be tallying opinions concerning us, and I'm sure I noted a few who spat depreciatingly.

Nevertheless, in obedience to their chief, they voiced a sort of welcome. Through Tooita we conveyed the purpose of our visit. A low rumble of displeasure ran through the gathering.

"Steady, old fellow. You will have to handle these Johnnies with kid gloves, y'know," warned Greaves. "They don't perform the fire walking for every one. They like to talk things— Oh, Lord!"

"What's wrong?" I asked, noticing a large wooden bowl being placed before the *buli*. "Is that the official chopping bowl?"

"No," said Michael, "it's a *kava* bowl for the mixing of their native drink."

"What is *kava* like?" asked Johnny.

"A vile concoction that tastes like bilge water," explained Greaves. "They make it from the root of *yangona*. It is customary to offer it to visitors and you must pretend to like it."

In silence we watched the preparations. First a quantity of the root was shredded, then dipped into a bit of water that had been poured in the bowl. Lifting the sodden mass, the maker twisted it, allowing the liquid to dribble back into the bowl. This was repeated over and over, a little more water being added each time until the bowl was filled with a milky liquid. At this point the natives began chanting, and, as if at a cue, two statuesque females entered the hut; each carried the polished half of a coconut shell in cupped hands. These were filled to the brim, and the girls approached us slowly, knelt at arms' length and offered the drink.

"The practise is to drain the cup lest they become offended," advised Greaves.

The *kava* bore out his prophecy. I nearly choked over the bitter, acrid stuff; and if you don't think a coconut shell holds much, try it sometime. Well, we downed the stuff and this seemed to please the natives greatly.

"*Bula bulavo!*" they chorused, clapping hands in unison.

One by one the Fijians partook of the *kava*, starting with the *buli* and going down the line. They seemed more friendly now and indicated a desire to inspect our apparatus. The camera was comprehensible to them, but the amplifier and microphones were beyond their ken. I sparked one of the batteries by shorting the terminals with a pair of pliers, and at the bluish flash two staid old bucks jumped a yard.

"Taboo," they muttered, edging away. Following a palaver with the *buli*, Tooita interpreted his conversation.

"After *kai-kai*† Rata Jone him like white fella make jumping picture go," he said. "The warriors make fine spear *meke*‡."

"Sure," we agreed.

The *buli* had had a temporary lean-to of palm branches erected for us and in its cool shade we found a typical native feed spread out. There were yams, wild pigeon, prawns and steaming slabs of tortoise meat. For dessert we had custard apples and wild oranges. It was not too bad.

By this time the warriors had assembled in the village square. They were decked out in barbaric outfits of *tapa* cloth and each carried a long, wicked looking spear. An old man began pounding on a hollow log, and to its rhythmic tempo the men performed a war-dance. Emulating the hardships of a jungle sortie, they would crawl on all fours as though stalking an enemy, then with wild cries they would leap up, thrusting at imaginary foes, cutting and slashing with astonishing agility. It gave us an opportunity to get some splendid action angles, and we used every type of lens in an effort to catch intimate bits of the performance.

I passed the earphones to the chief that he might listen in. Hearing the racket of his subjects greatly amplified by the recording device, his jaw dropped in amazement. Excitedly summoning the more important members of the tribe, the *buli* bade them listen. It was laughable to watch their reactions. Some dropped the phones with shrieks of fear, while others listened in wide eyed wonder. From that moment our position was assured. We were super beings. The *buli* made a long speech terminating it with a reverent bow.

"Fijians, him like white fella's magic," translated Tooita. "They grant wish. Will do great fire walking."

The *buli* pointed toward the bush surrounding the village, motioning us to follow him. Several men were commandeered to carry our apparatus, and after a short trek through the dense undergrowth we came upon a clearing. In its center was a circular pit some twenty feet in diameter. Natives were busy piling saplings and sticks into it.

"This is the place," excitedly whispered Greaves. "You have been admitted to a spot that few whites have ever seen."

We studied the location for our work. The heavy shadows cast by a tall wall of trees presented a photographic problem. After some debate, a two-inch lense set at f.3 speed was hit upon as a safe bet. Two microphones were hooked up in parallel circuits as an extra precaution. Nothing must fail.

THE pile of wood quite filled the pit by now, and one of the men rapidly twirled a pointed stick among stone and dried chips. As they began to smolder he coaxed a tiny flame from them. Igniting a primitive torch, he passed it to the chief, who in turn applied it to the pit. Up sprang long tongues of flame and soon the pile was a roaring fury. Left hand on each other's shoulders and the right holding a large rock, the Fijians snake-danced around the pit in mad frenzy. They hurled the stones at the fire and grabbed up others from a convenient pile. They sang an old, old song as they danced. Punctuated by the snap and crackle of the flames, its savage appeal was enhanced.

"A! woi! woi! woi! A! woi! woi! woi! A tabua levu!
A mudua, mudua, mudua, mudua! A! woi! woi! woi!"

This was kept up until all the stones were piled on the fire. Then with one final yell the natives halted abruptly.

"That is about all you can make today," said Greaves.

"But what about the fire walking?" we asked in dismay.

"The fire must burn until the stones reach the proper temperature," he explained. "It takes about twenty-four hours. Then they will return to walk across the pit."

†Food.
‡Dance.

There seemed to be no alternative; so, leaving Tooita on guard, we retraced our way to the village. It was just as well, for after a hasty meal garnished from our food hampers, we tacked up mosquito canopies and gratefully turned in. It was a hot, stuffy night, though, and I lay wide eyed for several hours despite my fatigue. The surf seemed unusually loud; somewhere a dog barked and I could hear a baby squalling just as its brothers would be doing all over the world. A new note assailed my ears. I listened more sharply. It was the unmistakable thump of a tomtom.

"Wonder what that could mean?" I murmured to myself.

"Oh, are you awake too?" I started. It was Greaves.

"Yes. Who could be beating a tomtom at this hour?" I asked.

"It is the tocsin of the fire walkers," he quietly answered. "Tonight, in answer to that summons, the tribe will assemble in a sacred jungle retreat. Eight men will be selected to perform tomorrow. That is one part of the ceremony that no white man has ever seen."

"What I would give to get a picture of that rendezvous!" I exclaimed.

"You could never find the place in the darkness," argued Greaves, "and besides they would probably kill you." He was right. But the thought of what might be going on out there tantalized me.

"I've a good mind to sneak out and at least get a peek at it," I persisted.

"I wouldn't try it. Did you by any chance notice that our hut is guarded tonight?"

Crawling to the doorway, I verified Michael's observation. Sure enough, a shadowy form became alert at my presence. It was an ably armed warrior. Blocking the exit with his bulk, he sternly grunted—

"Taboo!"

Greaves was chuckling when I returned to my mats.

"You Yanks are never satisfied," he chided good naturedly. Then seriously, "When she so disposes, Fiji guards her secrets well and the mystery of the fire walkers is one of them. What they do to offset the ravages of fire no one but themselves will ever know. Come along now. Forget it." I must have, for my next recollection was of dawn.

After a hurried breakfast we trekked out into the bush and prepared for action. The heat in the clearing was terrific. A withering blast emanated from the monster pit. Thick, oily clouds of smoke weaved and writhed from the depths of the blaze.

With crossed fingers I checked the outfit. Tropical dampness raises havoc with microphones. A clean cut signal was registered, however.

"Thank heaven," I breathed.

Johnny dried the moisture from his lenses and checked focus on each type attached to the revolving turret of the camera. We would have to snap from long shot to close up in jig time on this story. Nothing must slip, for we had traveled eight thousand miles to record the ritual. Back in New York, the editors would be waiting anxiously for the negative.

The soft harmony of male voices commenced.

"Fire dance, him begin now," nervously whispered Tooita.

"Here she goes," said Johnny fervently, snapping on the camera switch.

Carefully he watched the tachometer as he adjusted the speed. Eighty feet a minute, eighty-five, eighty-eight—ninety. We were ready.

Four abreast, brilliantly arrayed in vivid skirts of banana leaf, flower leis and shark tooth ornaments, the Fijians entered the clearing, led by their chief. Behind them they dragged long ropes woven from banyan roots. Still singing, the savages closed in on the pit with spears directed at it. Around and around they circled, crouching and leaping into the air alternately. Then, with a quick, deft movement they lunged at the fire, jabbing and poking the glowing mass savagely. The mound of rocks was being leveled by this attack.

Next they looped the heavy banyan ropes around the more obstinate boulders and tugged away. Slowly but surely the pit was smoothly graded. A faster note crept into their song and they became more animated. It was a weird sight as they weaved back and forth against the background of the pit, its awful heat creating a mirage effect over the whole scene. The savages seemed like imps of hell with their frizzled heads bobbing wildly, soot streaked faces, bodies glistening with coco oil. More natives entered, placing great piles of freshly cut palm branches close to the pit, while others laid out bundles of tightly woven grass trussed up with fiber.

"They contain food which will be tossed into the embers after the ceremony," explained Greaves in answer to my look. "It will be served at the fire feast tonight."

The stones were absolutely level now and, resuming the original soft cadence of their song, the natives squatted in orderly rows facing the pit. The *bulĭ* raised his hands for silence. Slowly turning, he shook his spear jungleward three times, then called out:

"Owooooooooooooooooooo! Owooooooooooooooooo!"

Save for the quiet whine of the camera motor the place was dead quiet. A minute passed, then the soft thud of running feet became audible. Out of the bush filed the eight warriors. Their faces were set in grim lines. Straight for the pit they jogged. Slowly and deliberately the leader placed his bare foot upon the livid coals. Across and back he walked, the others following fearlessly. I could see the blackened imprint of their scorched soles on the glowing rocks. Once again they crossed the pit; not one flinched.

Then hell broke loose. With demoniacal yells, the audience leaped up, grabbed the palm branches, hurling them upon the coals. Clouds of steam and smoke spurted up as damp greens met white heat. The bundles of food followed next, then the whole tribe jumped and wallowed in the smoldering mass. Hand in hand they whirled around the pit. The terrible heat soon had its effect though, for one by one they dropped to the ground exhausted. What a show! We moved in for close-ups of the walkers' feet, then called it a day.

Back at the village once more, we stripped and bathed in the cool waters of a natural lagoon. We laughed at each other's appearance. Soot begrimed, hair tousled, and red rimmed eyes still smarting from the acrid smoke, we looked a little like savages ourselves.

The *buli* insisted that we stay another night and I was glad, for they certainly treated us royally. By the light of gigantic driftwood bonfires we had dinner on the beach. Long into the night the natives danced and sang for our benefit. The women wore their finest *tapa* cloth dresses; even the children joined in to amuse us with quaint little dances. We reciprocated by playing our portable phonograph and it was interesting to watch their natural reaction upon hearing certain dance rhythms as interpreted by a currently popular Harlem band. The same basic tempo formed the pattern of their own melodies.

No one slept, and when the first streaks of dawn traced pale coral fingers across the cloudless sky, Tooita reminded us we must go. The exchange of gifts, final ceremony of our visit, took place. Tortoise shell bracelets, leis and spears were our lot. We were truly affected by the simple hospitality of these Melanesians. Standing in the tender, we could hear the sweet harmony of "Isa Lei"—farewell—drifting softly across the ever widening gap of water. I suddenly felt sad. How happy these people seemed, I thought. We would soon be battling with the complexities of civilization. Better they remain as they were.

Some one draped his arm around my shoulder. It was good old Greaves. He seemed moved, too.

"I shall never forget this visit, Michael," I assured him. He nodded and smiled.

"Not a bad show. What?"

IN *the* CART

By CHARLES GILSON

"WE BE men of different heart, Prang Lela. I am Chinese; you are a Malay. I believe in Confucius, you in Allah. But above all, I am an honest, howbeit a humble, merchant, and you are an outlaw and a thief."

Prang Lela, who was naked save for a red and white sarong, nodded gravely and then impertinently grinned.

"As you say, Cheong Ho," said he. "But there is another difference between us you have surely overlooked. Robber though I be, there is the truth in my face as in the blade of my kris. I am a man who speaks outright whatsoever is in his heart. Whereas you, Cheong Ho, are a liar!"

The Chinaman made a deprecatory gesture with his shapeless, pudgy hands.

"In the way of business, it may be," he admitted.

"Nay," cried Prang Lela, swinging his feet to the floor from the cushioned opium couch. "Whether awake or asleep, whether in business or in bed, Cheong Ho, you are a liar!"

The above whispered conversation had taken place in the Chinese restaurant of Brotherly Light, an establish-

ment in a side street in the Kalang district of Singapore, that had its attractions for those who liked the foul atmosphere tainted with the smell of garlic and opium smoke—also for those who appreciated a free entertainment given by four very jaded sing-song girls from Soochow.

In the outer room that opened on to the street these sing-song girls thrummed stringed instruments and strained shrill, thin voices, like four painted mechanical toys.

In the large inner room, through the narrow curtained doorway, where Prang Lela and Cheong Ho were talking, a third man lay sound asleep. All three had smoked opium; for by the side of each couch was a little lacquer table upon which were the usual accessories of the opium smoker—the spirit lamp, the carved ivory pipe, the metal skewer upon which the opium pills are rolled deftly between finger and thumb and a porcelain bowl containing a sticky substance that might have been treacle.

Prang Lela and Cheong Ho occupied two adjacent couches under a lighted hanging lamp of filigreed bronze. The man who was asleep, snoring rhythmically and softly, was in a corner of the room. He was a native gentleman of India, apparently a Telegu, possibly a field conductor on some mainland rubber plantation.

Not until the Indian had begun to snore had the Malay opened the foregoing conversation by discourteously prodding his stout Chinese neighbor in the ribs and saying:

"Bestir yourself, Cheong Ho. Let us get down to business."

The Chinese had rolled over, rather like an overfed sow on a bundle of straw. For a moment he had stared at the little brown barbarian, too astonished to have anything to say.

"You have the advantage of me," he had answered in Malay. "I am in truth Cheong Ho, an unworthy importer of cabbages. But who does me the honor to address me?"

THE Malay lay upon his back with one muscular leg cocked over a bent knee. He was staring up at the ceiling. His bare legs were very short, his arms abnormally long.

"You have heard of the Tiger of Ipoh?" he asked.

Cheong Ho gave a visible start.

"Prang Lela the outlaw!" he gasped.

"By Allah, that is my name."

The Chinaman gave a furtive glance at the couch occupied by the Indian.

"Are you not afraid to declare it so openly?" he whispered.

Prang Lela never moved. He was still staring up at the ceiling.

"My kris is under my pillow," said he. "I fear naught. We have a little matter of business to discuss, Cheong Ho. That is why I am here."

Cheong Ho protested. As politely as he could, he endeavored to explain that such an inoffensive and law abiding citizen as himself could have nothing in common with a man like Prang Lela—who was a notorious criminal and bandit—and for his pains, he was called a liar.

"Listen, Cheong Ho," the Malay went on, "all your life is a lie. In your heart you know it. And so do I. I know more than you suppose. It is your business to import cabbages; it is mine to be well informed. Let me be quite frank with you, for I believe in straight talk. I have long wondered, Cheong Ho, how such wealth as yours could be acquired from cabbages alone. I therefore set about making inquiries, for it had occurred to me, as a practical man, that a midnight raid upon your palatial residence might be both profitable and safe. The result of these investigations, however, led me to alter my plans. The natural spring is better than the pitcher, Cheong Ho. A milk cow is of greater worth than a waterskin filled with milk. I suggest that you take me into partnership, that I may have a share in these cabbages of yours."

Both men were sitting up on their

couches, their knees almost touching, their faces close together. Prang Lela was very calm and deliberate. Cheong Ho was trembling all over.

"This is an insult!" he blurted out. "I go at once to the police!"

"I do not think so," Prang Lela observed, without raising his voice. "If you do not fall in with my suggestion, the police will come to you. They will break into the godown on the Tanjong Pagar wharf where you store those cabbages of yours, and in the heart of every vegetable, wrapped up in oil paper, they will find two taels of opium, neither more nor less. That means to say that for every eight hundred cabbages you have one picul of imported opium. Of a surety, Cheong Ho, if I am a robber, you are a very clever smuggler who has fooled the customs for years."

The Chinaman glanced fearfully over a shoulder in the direction of the couch where lay the Indian with the salmon colored shirt and vermilion braces.

"Have a care," he exclaimed. "Remember, we are not alone in this room."

Prang Lela shrugged.

"That man is asleep," said he. "And besides, there can be nothing to fear from a heathen Telegu clerk. If a few dollars will not buy his silence, by Allah, there is always the kris! But we have nothing further to discuss. It only remains for you to take me into partnership on a basis of fifty per cent. I am not greedy, Cheong Ho. Since you pay for the cabbages and what they contain, it would not be fair if I were to make more out of it than you. I am a just man. I can be loyal to my friends."

Cheong Ho had risen to his feet. He had now mastered his fears to some extent. For the first time he looked Prang Lela straight in the face.

"You accuse me falsely," he declared, scrambling hastily into his clothes. "I have naught to fear either from you or from the police. It will profit you nothing to denounce me, and it may lead to your own arrest. In other words, I defy you to do your worst."

Prang Lela had also risen.

"Then you refuse my offer?" he asked.

Cheong Ho hesitated, swallowed, spluttered, and then found his voice.

"I defy you," he repeated, and went shuffling out of the room.

Prang Lela was grinning. As he put on his little embroidered jacket and secreted his kris under his red and white sarong, he nodded once or twice. And then he, too, passed into the street.

Nearly a quarter of an hour must have elapsed before the native gentleman of India stirred on the couch at the other end of the room. He sat up, stretched his arms, yawned and snapped his vermilion braces.

Then he put on his collar and tied a pale blue tie in front of a glass. When he had buttoned his coat, he tucked a silver headed Malacca cane under an arm and walked into the outer room.

Outside, in the street, he walked in a leisurely fashion, swinging his cane and holding a cigaret holder in such a way as to display a sapphire ring on the third finger of his left hand. Then he suddenly disappeared through a door into a tobacconist's shop in Telegraph Street.

From this establishment there emerged an hour later a white man, wearing a khaki shirt and a pair of Puchmurree riding breeches. This clean shaven young man with ginger colored hair and an eyeglass screwed in his left eye received an imposing salute from the turbaned Sikh policeman at the corner of the road, who had regarded the Telegu with undisguised contempt.

IN THE tiffin hour Ben Seton, still wearing his Puchmurree riding breeches, put in an appearance at the bar in the Singapore Club. He consumed three or four *stengahs,* backed himself for a hundred dollars to give a certain rubber broker six strokes at golf, ate a huge lunch of Malay curry, and then wandered off to the Tanjong Pagar wharves, where he spent the afternoon talking to the monopoly men and making inquiries.

He then returned to the town, entered the tobacconist's shop in Telegraph Street by the front door and came out of the side door, just before six o'clock, in the person of a Tamil bullock-cart driver, with long hair, a dirty loincloth and smelling vilely of rancid *ghee*.

It was this Tamil bullock-cart driver who turned up about half an hour later at Cheong Ho's little tin office alongside his godown. Cheong Ho was still at work with his Chinese clerk. He was perched on top of a high stool with his little fat legs curled up under him and a Burmese cheroot in his mouth.

Cheong Ho could speak very little Tamil, and the bullock driver knew only a few words in Malay and less in English. However, they came by devious means to business.

The Tamil had a very serviceable cart and two very fine white oxen, and he wanted a job. He was ready to put his services at the disposal of the Chinese merchant, and the Chinaman jumped at the offer.

Cheong Ho explained that he was expecting a cargo of China cabbages from Hongkong and that for business reasons he did not propose to store these vegetables in his godown. He wanted them taken to a certain attap roofed warehouse in the jungle, for which purpose he was willing to engage the Tamil and his bullock-cart.

There followed a little inevitable haggling, when Cheong Ho expatiated upon the cheapness of bullock transport and the Tamil enlarged upon the poverty of himself and all his relations. But in the end terms were settled, and the bullock driver promised to present himself at the jetty when the expected ship arrived.

This matter being duly arranged, Cheong Ho shut up his office, got into his private rickshaw and drove home to his opium pipe and his new concubine. As for the Tamil, he remained hanging around the wharf; and when the place was more or less deserted, he squatted down on his haunches, leaned his back against the wall of Cheong Ho's godown and fell fast asleep.

He was awakened by a kick in the ribs. He opened his eyes and looked up into the face of Prang Lela. The palm trees and the tall tapangs in the jungle on the other side of the road were silhouetted against a starlit sky. The moon that had arisen beyond Blakan Mati Island cast a silvery pathway across the surface of the land locked sea.

Again the conversation was conducted with neither fluency nor ease. The Tiger of Ipoh, for all his varied accomplishments, regarded Tamil as the language of swine. He did his best to explain that he had seen the bullock driver talking to Cheong Ho, but not until he had produced a five dollar bill did the Tamil display enough intelligence to give an account of the conversation he had had with Cheong Ho.

He told Prang Lela of the cargo of cabbages and the attap roofed warehouse in the jungle. And when he had accepted the five dollars in exchange for this information, he offered audible thanks to a heathen goddess called Durgâ, and excused himself on the plea that he had a clandestine appointment with the wife of an intimate friend.

Thus was the whole business concluded to the satisfaction of all three parties concerned. Cheong Ho had decided that it was no longer safe to keep his cabbages in his godown. He had therefore made arrangements to have them conveyed to a safe place where he could meet Quang Fu, his confederate and compatriot, to whom he knew he could sell one picul of opium at a very considerable profit. Prang Lela, on his part, had found out where he could find the cabbages to which, with the help of a few of his armed ruffians, he could help himself without giving Cheong Ho any share at all in the proceeds. And as for the Tamil bullock driver, there was no reason to suppose that he was dissatisfied with his day's work. He, too, had done all he meant to do—and he had got five dollars for nothing.

CHEONG HO'S cabbages were carried down the gangway in crates and were duly passed through the customs. The monopoly man did not bother very much about Cheong Ho, whom he knew to be a Chinese merchant of repute and unblemished reputation. A bullock-cart was drawn up in the roadway, and the Tamil driver sat on his heels by the side of his two little white buffalos that were cropping the rank kiss-grass under the trees.

Three or four cargadores, dockyard coolies who were there for the purpose, carried the crates from the ship to the bullock-cart. Cheong Ho personally supervised the loading of the cart, and was very careful not to let any one of the crates out of his sight for an instant. And when the Tamil, leading his oxen, moved off along the narrow road that led straight into the jungle, Cheong Ho followed in his private rickshaw, the coolie walking to keep pace with the slow buffaloes.

The jungle road was but a narrow track between the trees and tropic undergrowth. Though the sun was already setting, there were places where it was so dark that Cheong Ho could not see the cart in front of him. No sound disturbed the silence save the creaking of the wheels of the two vehicles.

Progress was painfuly slow. It took more than an hour for the oxen to cover three miles. On and on they went, farther and farther into the jungle, the Tamil walking in front, Cheong Ho in his rickshaw bringing up the rear. And then an extraordinary thing happened, something that frightened the life out of the stout Chinaman, who could not get Prang Lela out of his head and whose nerves were none of the strongest. A man jumped out of the jungle, placed himself betwen the rickshaw and the bullock-cart, and in a gruff voice ordered Cheong Ho to halt.

At that very moment the bullock-cart had stopped at a place where there was another track to the right, a path that led through the jungle toward Kalang.

There was every reason in the world why Cheong Ho should have been highly alarmed. In the dim light of the stars that penetrated the overhanging branches of the trees, he could see that the man before him was a British sergeant of police who wanted to know where the Chinaman was off to at that time of night.

Cheong Ho explained that he was taking a load of cabbages to a friend whom he was very careful not to mention by name, since Quang Fu was known to be under police suspicion. He declared that he was but an honest merchant, a humble importer of vegetables and fruit from China and Japan, whereas his client was a wholesale dealer in the same line of business; and as this answer was considered satisfactory, he was allowed to continue his journey—but not until after an interval of four or five minutes, during which the Tamil had not been idle.

For the bullock-cart had been backed into the other path that came in from the right, and the two little white buffaloes had been taken out and hitched to another cart that was there waiting, a very similar cart in all respects and which, also, as it happened, was loaded with cabbages in crates.

When Cheong Ho came up in his rickshaw he was very excited and flustered. He was still thinking of Prang Lela and wondering why a police officer had accosted him; and, as if to relieve his feelings, he roundly abused the Tamil, ordering the man to hurry on and waste no more valuable time.

As for the Tamil, he paid no attention to Chinese oaths that meant nothing to him. He belonged to a coolie race, and he accepted the world as he found it. With the leading rein in his hand he set off again on the track, walking with bent knees and dragging his oxen after him, the wheels of the cart creaking as loudly as before. And from that point Cheong Ho—though he never dreamed it—followed the wrong cart to the attap roofed house of Quang Fu in the jungle.

THERE followed another half hour's marching. In places the path was so narrow between the giant palms that the undergrowth and long lalang grass became tangled in the wheels of the cart.

The track ascended a hill where there was a clearing. And here stood the dwelling of Quang Fu. Cheong Ho ordered the cart to stop. Then he got out of his rickshaw. And the Tamil squatted down on his haunches on the ground as if he had no further interest in the proceedings.

The Chinaman knocked on the door and waited. The oxen were again cropping the grass, when there came a sound which was a strange thing to hear in the midst of a tropic jungle—the sound of the drawing of a curtain. Narrow vertical shafts of light appeared, obviously through the cracks of a door, which a moment afterward was opened wide, to admit a flood of bright light into the darkness that disclosed the two little white buffaloes and the Tamil sitting on the ground.

The room within was brilliantly illumined by several cheap kerosene lamps suspended from the ceiling. There appeared to be no windows or any means of ventilation, especially when the curtain was drawn across the doorway.

The door had been opened by a Chinaman who might have been Cheong Ho's twin brother. Inside the room were some half dozen other Chinese of the coolie class, all naked to the waist, the perspiration glistening on their hairless chests.

Quang Fu lifted his hands.

"*Ho-la-ma!*" he exclaimed. "Cheong Ho, you have kept me waiting long!"

"*Hi lao!*" sighed Cheong Ho. "The way through the jungle is long and the road is dark. If the truth be told, I was lucky to get here. But I have brought what you want. It has come straight from the ship."

At that information Quang Fu chuckled.

"My men can bring in the crates," said he, "with no further delay."

"Eight hundred cabbages," said Cheong Ho. "That means one picul of chandu. And nobody knows."

It did not take Quang Fu's coolies long to carry the crates from the bullock-cart into the house. These they put down side by side in the middle of the room. And then Quang Fu closed the door and pulled the curtain. Outside, the Tamil sat alone in the darkness. His eyes were wide open and he was listening. In the jungle thickets he could hear the voices of men who were whispering, and now and again he heard a twig break underfoot. Prang Lela and his men had already surrounded the house and, confident that they were about to reap a rich harvest—one picul of smuggled opium—they bided their time.

They emerged from the shadows noiselessly, like so many jungle cats, six or seven black crouching forms, with now and again the starlight flickering like a firefly on the bright blade of a kris. The Tamil bullock driver came out with a kind of grunt as he was seized suddenly by the scruff of the neck and jerked bodily to his feet.

"Spawn of a frog, be off! *Pergi Gerhennum!* Clear out—and look sharp about it!"

The knees of the Tamil trembled. The voice was that of Prang Lela, the Tiger of Ipoh.

"I am but a poor man," the Tamil choked. "What of my bullock-cart?"

The answer he got was the back of a kris that was stroked gently across his throat.

"Better be poor and live honestly, infidel dog, than associate with knaves. Leave your oxen and *kuta lemba* to me. Clear out or die, the choice is your own."

Releasing the Tamil, Prang Lela sent him flying with a kick. The man dived into the darkness of the jungle, taking the path along which he had led his yoke of oxen. He fled fast, but he did not flee far. For, when he had gone about fifty yards, he pulled up, took a whistle

from the leather pouch at his girdle, blew a soft long note and waited. A voice came out of the darkness and it spoke in English.

"Mr. Seton, sir? I've got the men here."

"Get as near to the house as you can, Sergeant. Keep under cover. They may have left a man outside. I'll call you up with the whistle when you're wanted. Did the other cart get away all right?"

"Sent it straight back to headquarters under escort, sir."

"Capital! A cartload of chandu—that's a pretty useful haul. And in five minutes, if all goes well, we'll have Cheong Ho and Quang Fu and all the evidence we want, to say nothing of Prang Lela. What do you think of that?"

"He's not mixed up in this business!" the sergeant exclaimed, incredulous.

"More than he'll like," said Seton. "But stand by for the whistle. I may want you in a hurry."

Almost before he had finished speaking, the pseudo-Tamil had vanished into the darkness. A few minutes later he had gained the clearing in which stood Quang Fu's house with the curtained doorway and the attap roof.

IN THE meantime the two Chinese men of business had got down to brass tacks quicker than is customary in the Far East.

"And you will pay on receipt?" asked Cheong Ho, in a nervous, deferential manner. "To speak true words, I am anxious to depart."

"Why such haste?" asked Quang Fu. "We be men who understand each other and half the night is yet before us."

Cheong Ho shuffled uneasily upon his feet.

"I feel that all may not be well," said he. "The police are in the neighborhood. They may suspect."

Quang Fu stroked his double chin.

"Then we had best not break open the cabbages," he observed. "I may safely take the word of the incorruptible Cheong Ho that the stuff is up to weight."

"No doubt of that," said Cheong Ho. "No doubt of it at all."

It was at this juncture that the conversation was interrupted by the unannounced arrival of Prang Lela and his men. They burst into the room, each man armed with a kris; and the two Chinese merchants and Quang Fu's six coolies immediately threw up their hands, as if they were performing some well rehearsed ritual. They stood staring like men of wax, and then began to shiver as if they were cold.

Prang Lela set about the affair in a business-like manner that proved him no novice in a crisis of this sort. He made all the Chinese line up with their backs to a wall. He satisfied himself that none of them was armed, and specially warned them that if one of them moved he would forthwith slaughter the lot. And then, having arrived at this preliminary understanding, he proceeded to break open the crates, as if from sheer love of destructiveness.

When he pulled out the first round and juicy cabbage he was grinning from ear to ear.

"It would have been better for you, Cheong Ho, I am thinking," he observed, "had you taken me into partnership. The milk of the coconut contains more nutriment than the shell."

Cheong Ho could do nothing but mumble under his breath. In the light of the lamp his complexion had turned a sickly green.

As the shadow of a cloud is cast upon smooth water, the grin gradually disappeared from Prang Lela's pleasant face. He had torn away the outer leaves of the homely vegetable he held in his hand, he had broken open the heart of the cabbage, and there was nothing inside of it, nothing at all. Prang Lela's copper countenance bore an expression that was half astonishment and half indignation. He might have been grievously and personally insulted.

"By Allah, what is the meaning of this?" he demanded, and looked across at Cheong Ho, at whom, also, Quang Fu was staring in wrathful surprise.

Prang Lela snatched at another cabbage, tore it to shreds and cast it to the floor.

"By the beard of the Prophet!" he gasped. "Is this white magic or black?"

Quang Fu upon a sudden forgot his own danger. He was still staring at his confederate, Cheong Ho, when he burst out:

"Small wonder my incorruptible friend was in such haste to depart! I was to buy a pepper bag filled with sand! Son of a stinking tortoise! Accursed flea bitten thief! May you die in a barbarous desert and your corpse be devoured by swine!"

It was at this moment that the Tamil slipped noiselessly past the open door, pulled aside the inner curtain a matter of an inch or so and looked cautiously into the room.

Prang Lela was taking a deep breath as if he were going to dive.

"Is this another of your swindles, Cheong Ho?" he asked, between clenched teeth. "If so, it is the last."

Cheong Ho was staring with a vacant expression at the cabbage leaves that strewed the floor. The fat upon his chin seemed somehow to have sagged around his neck, like the dewlap of a cow. He was as limp as rubber.

He looked up at Prang Lela with a hopeless, pitiful expression.

"Did I not tell you," he said, "that I was but a humble importer of vegetables and fruit?"

"You lie in your throat!" shrieked Quang Fu, so livid with rage that his voice ended in a kind of squeak. "Were your tongue to be plucked out, it would shrivel in the sunlight like the slime on a duck pond."

Prang Lela was not listening. He was pulling one cabbage after another at random out of the crates, tearing them open and hurling them right and left.

"Fooled!" he cried. "By Allah, you pay for this!"

He swung his kris, then paused to stare at Cheong Ho's face. The humble merchant, open mouthed and open eyed, looked more amazed than afraid.

"You wrong me," he protested, in a plaintive voice. "Both of you wrong an honest man. I have been swindled."

It was then that a shrill whistle sounded in the doorway and the curtain was wrenched aside. The half clothed Tamil bullock driver stood in the light of the lamp. In his right hand he held a revolver that he had leveled straight at the head of Prang Lela.

"Hands up!" he cried in English, and then in Malay. "*Mata mata,* Prang Lela. This house is surrounded."

AS DAY was breaking a Tamil bullock driver conducted eight Chinese and six Malay prisoners, handcuffed and escorted by a party of Sikh policemen under a British sergeant, to Singapore jail. On the road Cheong Ho spoke.

"But, pray, tell me," he asked. "I can not wholly understand how this thing came to pass. Where are the cabbages that came all the way from Hongkong?"

"In the jungle it was very dark," the Tamil answered. "In the darkness one cart is very like another, especially when the wrong cart is drawn by the right bullocks. For the last part of our journey, Cheong Ho, you followed the wrong cart. A misfortune not only for yourself, but for your friend, Quang Fu, and your enemy, Prang Lela, who was nothing but a common blackmailer, when all is said and done."

Cheong Ho walked, puffing like a grampus, with lowered head, his manacled hands behind his back.

"It was in truth cleverly done," said he. "But I trust no word of this will ever get to China. In fooling others there is great merit, both in this world and the next, if a next world there be. But to be made a fool of is unspeakable and eternal disgrace for a man of my refined instincts and superior education."

They Got Their Man

By FRANK J. SCHINDLER

AFTER Deacon Fergus was sent to the Colorado State penitentiary for playing a confidence game, resisting an officer and assault with a deadly weapon, he became one of the most model prisoners in the institution. He had a sanctimonious appearance that was very misleading. However, he was a bad and tough *hombre,* and had a criminal record that would fill a book.

As he became so meek, suave and unctuous, the warden figured here was one tough guy that was on the road to righteousness, at last. The Deacon sought an audience with the warden, received it and swore that going straight was the one thing he wanted to do most; and pleaded for an outside job.

"All right," the warden agreed. "I'll give you a job on the prison farm."

So Deacon went to hoeing spinach and shooting potato bugs. All the while, he was looking for a chance to lam. It came one day when the guard told him to grab a spade and follow him. Deacon grabbed the spade with enthusiasm, and followed the guard behind some shrubs where he was told to dig a hole. And with as much enthusiasm as he had grabbed the spade, Deacon now swung it at the unsuspecting guard and spanked him on the head. It was a solid thwack, but the guard was made of stern stuff and reached for his hand gun as his knees buckled.

Deacon didn't know whether the guard was out or not, so he didn't stand on the order of his going. He hit the grit, expecting to hear bullets whistling around his ears, but the guard's motion to his gun had been merely instinctive. He went cold for a few minutes, by which time Deacon, taking advantage of all cover, made good his escape. He traveled and reached a railroad, flipped a freight train on the fly and, later, left it the same way.

Evening brought him to a road, where he came upon a lone man. The man was stooped over, pumping up a tire he had just repaired. Deacon bounced a cobblestone off the man's head and the man went down on his face. Deacon stripped off the man's clothes, tore off his prison garb, rolled the man into the dry ditch and tossed the prison clothes after him.

He put on the man's pants, disconnected the pump, rode away with the man's car, and finished his dressing after he got under way. Eventually he gave everybody the slip.

The guard came in with a sore head and reported that the sanctimonious so-and-so of a Deacon had decamped. The alarm was sent out, but the Deacon slipped through somehow. The warden looked up his history.

"He's got a wife in Blue Hen, Wisconsin," said the warden. "What's the population of that burg?"

His assistant looked it up.

"Twenty-three thousand."

"All right. Wire the chief of police in Blue Hen to keep tab on Deacon's wife.

He may try to communicate with her."

The Blue Hen chief learned that the Deacon's wife had a telephone; so he ordered the telephone company to report to him the numbers of all calls that were given connection with her phone. Nothing happened for two weeks. All her calls were numbers in Blue Hen and none of them led to the Deacon.

Finally a call came in from the Big Town. The operator reported it as Ostend 9090. The chief had a hunch, so he did his duty.

Officer McCluskey, in charge of long distance calls at the detective bureau in the Big Town, was paring his finger nails when the telephone jangled.

"Detective bureau," he mumbled mechanically, shoving the receiver to his ear.

"Long distance from Blue Hen," said the operator.

"Hook 'em on, sister."

"This is chief of police of Blue Hen," said an excited voice. "Got a hot tip for you, on which you can arrest Deacon Fergus. He lammed from the Colorado pen a few weeks ago, after cracking a guard on the head with a shovel. He's a confidence man, all around tough guy, and I understand he has a habit of using firearms."

"Yes?" asked McCluskey. "And where is he cooling his heels?"

"He has a wife in Blue Hen. We've been tracing all the calls to her telephone. She got a call from the Big Town, from Ostend 9090."

"It's a swell tip," said McCluskey. "Thanks. We'll get busy on it right away."

McCluskey called information, but the girl reported that Ostend 9090 was an unpublished number about which she could give no information. He asked for her superior, the supervisor, and argued with him. The supervisor wouldn't divulge the number, either. So McCluskey got the supervisor's superior, with the same results. They all knew their company's inhibitions and refused to give him the address of Ostend 9090.

Then McCluskey called the chief of detectives and put the proposition up to him. While the chief was using pressure on the telephone officials to obtain the address, McCluskey sent a squad of detectives to the Ostend telephone exchange, at 80-82 Ostend Avenue, there to await developments.

The men in the squad car waited, all on edge. They had been told that Deacon was a desperate character and they looked to their shotguns, tear bombs, and saw that their machine guns were in perfect order. Detective Burton squatted down with his ear cocked to the radio.

Meanwhile, the chief of detectives had succeeded in obtaining the address of Ostend 9090 from the telephone company.

Over the police car radio came the syllabicated accents of the police announcer:

"Go to 3—0—6 Os-tend Aven-you for Os-tend 9—0—9—0."

The squad car roared down Ostend Avenue and quickly shot up to No. 306.

Five coppers scratched their heads and said, "What the hell!"

No. 306 was the Ostend police station. However, orders were orders. In they went.

"Well, visitors from the 9th Precinct!" exclaimed the desk sergeant. "Greetings, boys!"

"Visitors, hell!" growled Detective Burton. "We just got a call to come over to 306 Ostend and pinch a guy by the name of Deacon Fergus. Got a guy by that monicker here?"

"Sure," the desk sergeant said. "Got pinched night before last for house breaking and assault with a deadly weapon."

"For the love of Bill Higgins! Is your telephone 9090?"

"Sure! That's the pay telephone in this dump. We let the yegg call up his wife yesterday from that telephone. What about it?"

"Nerts!" exploded Detective Burton, and waved his coppers toward the exit.

SENNETT'S HAUL

A Complete Novel of the Freebooters of the Spanish Main

By HENRY VINCENT

PROLOGUE

THE hour was approaching midnight. The velvet softness of the tropic night hung over the roadstead, in which a single ship lay. A stately ship of three masts, square rigged on the fore, main and mizzen, with a large lateen yard on the last named. She was in darkness save for the gleam of a large poop lantern. There was nothing sinister about her high carved bulk; nothing to indicate to the shrewdest observer anything of the death and destruction she had wreaked on that peaceful coast a short time before.

In the black shadow cast by the break of the quarterdeck two people stood, a man and a woman. They talked to each other in low and anxious tones, as if they feared to disturb into wakefulness the reclining figures of the two or three men on deck, who constituted the anchor watch. It was the man's voice that betrayed the greater anxiety.

"Must you go to him, madam?" he whispered.

"I must indeed," she replied.

"Pray, take heed of my warning. Don't go. You don't know Captain Collot. I do. I haven't been his quartermaster these two years for nothing. Take my warning. Stay here. I'll put you ashore at the first glint of dawn."

"I must go to him. I must see him. Now."

The man shook his head.

"See here. I'll put you ashore now. I'll row you myself in the skiff."

"No, no. Thank you, Matt. But I

must stay. I must see him." She turned away from him and ascended the ladder.

"So be it then." He ascended after her. "Maybe it's not so hopeless as it seems," he muttered to himself.

"See here," he said to her. "I'll wait here if you need me. If I hear you cry out, I'll be in there, Collot or no Collot. Go—and wish you luck."

She went from him to a door under the poop, paused for a few moments while she caught her breath, which all at once had become spasmodic, and then tapped sharply at the door. A slight noise came from within—a shuffle, a footstep or two, and then the door was opened wide, immediately throwing a shaft of light on the dark deck outside. A man stood at the door—tall, broad shouldered and black bearded. He bowed at once on perceiving his visitor.

"Entrez, madame," he invited.

The man towered above his visitor, looking at her for awhile with a countenance on which there sat a faint and not unpleasing smile.

"You've come then," he said to her.

"Yes, I've come."

"You would come. I knew you would."

"I've come," she repeated dully. "Now show me the child."

"But surely," he replied with a faint indication of surprise. "In a few moments. But first let us—"

"Where is it?"

"Calmly, madam. You have my word; the child's safety is assured."

"Your word!"

"My word. Is it not enough? The word of a gentleman of fortune. You would not doubt me, eh?"

He turned from her and opened a door in the side of the cabin. A small sleeping cabin stood revealed. The woman took a step forward and peered over his extended arm, while her hands crossed themselves over her breasts. Lying asleep in a bunk was a small child a few months old. As they watched, it moved an arm under its cheek.

"See," said the man. "He goes ashore tomorrow."

"And I? I go with him?"

"Surely not. Why hurry? The child is safe. He will await you at the house of the good Padre Joachim."

"When do I go ashore?"

"We sail in three days. You will honor me by being my guest till then."

"So be it," she replied wearily.

He closed the door and turned once more to face her.

"And now, we two, let us make the most of this brief time," he said. "In three days I go—I and my ship—perhaps forever. Who knows? Still I have you for three days."

She made no reply.

"But I am forgetting," he said after a pause. "You are overstrained and weary. Do please be seated awhile."

HE TURNED away to a small sideboard from the top of which he took two wine glasses. Then he stooped and opened a paneled door in the cupboard. His head and shoulders were bent low; he could not see the woman. Her attitude, which had become relaxed to a dead inertness, now stiffened all at once. Swiftly her right hand sought the interior folds of her garments. A momentary fumbling, and then it came away again; but now the hand was tightly clenched.

Silently and swiftly she moved toward him, her right hand raised. The sinews of her wrist were plainly visible; there was grim purpose in the raised forearm. And then, as her body lunged forward, like a flash the hand descended. Simultaneously the body of the man rose to straighten itself, but this purpose was never fulfilled. A gasp, a guttural moan, the body sagged and then collapsed. In a moment or two it was still. On the carpeted deck, face downward, lay the lifeless body of Jules Collot. Seven inches of thin and polished steel had entered his back and penetrated his heart.

For quite ten seconds the woman gazed at him, her eyes staring, her cheeks drained of color. Then she turned her head away and, still standing in the same attitude, placed her hand over her eyes. Her body swayed. But for the support of the table she would have fallen. She lurched heavily against it and tottered almost on to her knees. Then she straightened herself suddenly and moved to the door of the sleeping cabin. Noiselessly she opened it and stepped inside. She leaned over the bunk and grasped the sleeping child, hurriedly wrapped a blanket around it and then came out.

"Sh-sh!"

A figure disengaged itself from the blackness of the main shrouds and approached her softly.

"Is it you, Matt?" she whispered tremulously.

"Yes. Is it the babe you've got there?"

"It is."

"He let you take it?"

"I took it. I— He's dead. I killed him."

"You killed him! Captain Collot! You? Great God, madam! How—?"

"I stabbed him."

He gripped her arm forcibly.

"We must get away," he whispered. "At once. Wait here. I'll bring aft the skiff. Lord!"

He left her and sped silently down the ladder to the maindeck. He was gone four or five minutes. When he appeared again he beckoned to her urgently.

"Come," he whispered. "I've got her below the gangway. Get down into her at once."

In a few moments they were in the boat. He shoved her off with the blade of an oar against the ship's side. Then with sturdy strokes he rowed the boat out of the dull arc of radiance of the poop lantern.

"To the shore," she said after a pause.

He made no reply, but continued to pull with all his strength.

"To the shore," she repeated insistently. "I must get ashore. I must."

"Impossible, madam," he replied.

"Only for half an hour. In half an hour I can find him and bring him away also. Please, Matt."

He ignored her entreaties, and after a time she relapsed into silence.

"Maybe we can get there in a few days, if the *Buenaventura* sails," he said. "But not now."

"Where are you taking me then?"

"To the shore—in time," he replied. "But not at San Fernando."

"Why not, Matt?"

"Because San Fernando means death for you and me. We've got to put as great a distance as we can between us and the ship before sunrise. We must go fast and far. Pray to God, madam, to give me strength while I row."

CHAPTER I

THE FLYING JIB

OF ALL the lovely island beaches to be found in the vast West Indian Archipelago no fairer prospect is afforded than that of the western side of a small island known to mariners as the Flying Jib. Far from the ordinary track of ships, it is little frequented even in these days of multitudinous ocean travel; in the earlier half of the 18th Century it was barely known at all.

It is a very small island, no more than three miles in length; its greatest breadth is less than two. It is triangular in shape, the northern end tapering to a very sharp point, a feature which doubtless suggested its name of Flying Jib to one of its earliest discoverers. Although rising to no great height above the sea, its hilly contours are bold and, in parts, almost precipitous. Woods of great luxuriance cover most of the island, but here and there a grassy upland thrusts itself above the tree clad hillocks in the foreground.

On a certain evening in the earlier half of the 18th Century there lay in the anchorage a sloop of the kind one might have seen at that period engaged in the fisheries and coastal trade of the North American colonies. She lay at anchor about a quarter of a mile from the shore. A small boat was drawn up on the beach just opposite.

No one was to be seen on the shore, but on the deck of the sloop, a little forward of the capstan, two sailors lounged at their ease, smoking. They talked together in disjointed sentences between intervals of puffing at their pipes, and their conversation concerned the boat which lay on the beach. The sun had sunk to the western horizon, and the deep violet and gold of the distant ocean betokened the rapid approach of darkness, when one of the men lazily drew himself to his feet and lurched rather than walked to the ship's side nearest the shore. For some time he leaned over the bulwark contemplatively puffing at his pipe. Then he spat in the water and jerked a sentence over his shoulder at his shipmate—

"He'll stay ashore all night; you can bet on that."

"He allus stays the night," the other responded. "He don't know it, but I sailed with him to this 'ere island two

years back. He won't take no old hands with him, not if he knows it."

"D'ye mean he allus ships a fresh crew? Why does he do that?"

"That's what we'd like to know. Why does he come here at all? Matt Saint has come to this island at intervals for the last three years. Why? Some says it's something to do with his dead wife as lays buried way back in Charleston. Do we believe that? It don't sound sense. It ain't sense. It ain't as if she was buried on the island—which she ain't. Then why does he come here?"

"That wife talk won't hold the gaff. Where did the tale come from? Maybe he started it himself."

"I guess it ain't his wife that brings him here, though I'll allow he was mighty fond of her. He's a tough handful is Cap'n Matt Saint, and he'd lay a man flat with a belaying pin as soon as look at 'im, but I've seen him shed tears when *her* name was mentioned."

"That's all as may be. But what brings him here? It ain't for a dead woman as lies buried at Charleston."

"There's talk way back in Charleston as how Cap'n Saint ain't all as he reckons to be. Or if he is, then he wasn't always so good maybe. Every one knows, of course, as how he's careful to keep God's commandments. He goes to church regular and he's looked up to. *We* knows as how he don't allow no work done aboard on the Sabbath, and also he won't stand for no profane swearing on the Sabbath neither. He gets us aft for prayers and a psalm, and everything's all according to the Book.

"But you've seen him and I've seen him behave worse than a savage Indian when the wind got foul, and his talk when he's in liquor ain't all about the Bible. From what I've heard him say he's seen some wicked things done in his time."

"P'raps I knows more than you about Cap'n Saint," interrupted the other. "D'ye know there's talk way back there as how Saint sailed under no nation's colors when he was not so much younger."

"Well, so he might. So might a good many more. He wouldn't be the only one in those parts as tried his luck at fortune."

"But that ain't all that's bad. There's plenty, as you say, as have sailed under queer colors. But there's talk that Matt Saint was a real bad 'un. They say the King's officers had a big reward out for him, or some one very much like him, only having a name that was a little bit different."

"If you ask me, there's more to do with his past on this island than there is with his dead wife as lies buried in Charleston."

"Did you notice he took a satchel with him ashore?"

"Aye, and a lantern too," responded the other. "He allus takes that satchel. He took it ashore with him when I came here two years ago."

"Did you notice it when he brought it back aboard?"

"I saw him bring it aboard. I never handled it though. He wouldn't let any one touch it."

"You can bet your soul he wouldn't. Now what d'ye think would be in that there bag?"

"What he goes ashore on purpose to get maybe."

"Just so. But what?"

"The gig's over the side. Suppose one of us, or say both of us, was to go ashore in the gig and have a quiet look round. Maybe there's something there that's worth our while to see."

"His orders were no one was to leave the ship."

"Right. So they was. But supposing we was to get back before daylight. He'll not be back afore tomorrow forenoon. What'll he know?"

"What d'ye think there is ashore there?"

"That's what we'll find out. I'm going anyway. Come or stay as you like. I'm going to take the gig ashore."

The speaker rose and stole aft to the stern where the gig's painter trailed overboard. After a little hesitation the

other man followed him. By the time he had reached the stern the boat had been hauled up under the counter. In a few moments the pair were in the boat and pulling quietly for the shore.

CAPTAIN Matthew Saint returned to the *Holy Apostle* a little before noon on the following day. He returned as he had gone, alone. The gig, which was taken ashore by the two sailors the previous evening, was still on the beach where they had left her.

As soon as the captain stepped on board he made it clear that he was in a great hurry to be off.

"Get the skiff hoisted at once," he shouted to the two men and a boy, who were all that remained on board of his crew.

He lent them a hand himself and, as soon as the boat was hoisted, he ordered them with many oaths to get the foresail up and man the capstan. But at this point one of the men reported that two of the crew were ashore.

"Damn them and damn you!" Saint responded in a passion. "Get the fores'l on her and don't talk, blast ye."

There was indeed some apparent reason for the captain's haste. The wind, which during the morning had fallen to a dead calm, was now blowing in hot and fitful gusts. The atmosphere was thick and sultry. Away on the weather side of the island a tall bank of purplish black clouds had piled itself up, and now at short intervals the dark mass was rent by sharp streaks of forked lightning. All the signs pointed to one of those swift rising storms of great violence that sometimes occur in regions of high temperature.

Captain Saint appeared to consider his anchorage none too secure, and he determined to put to sea at once and get well clear of the line of reefs to seaward before the storm descended upon him. Ignoring the expostulations of his small crew, who did not relish the idea of putting to sea short handed in the face of such weather, he drove them with threats, oaths and curses to strenuous exertion. In a comparatively short time the sloop had left her anchorage and was pursuing a hazardous course seaward in the teeth of a gale of great violence. With difficulty they weathered the northern point of the island, and once they were well away to sea the captain hove the sloop to.

During the night and the whole of the next day the gale raged unabated. On the second night the weather moderated somewhat, although the sea remained rough and the prospects were none too favorable for the future. The next morning the wind was strong, but with rather less than gale force. The island was nowhere in sight.

For the next ten days the crew of the sloop had a bad time, both from the violence of the weather and also from that of the captain, who lost no opportunity of exhibiting toward them a black humor that seemed at times to border on rancor. At length the wind moderated to a stiff breeze from the east-southeast, and Captain Saint at once set a course for his home port.

During the voyage the captain grew more and more morose. He consumed great quantities of liquor, and once, for a whole day and night, he did not stir from his bunk. When he did appear on deck, his demeanor was so savage that his small crew avoided him in fear of bodily harm. He took an observation at noon and set a course for the steersman; and when that trembling fellow failed to grasp at once the meaning of an order, he dealt him a clump on the side of the head that knocked him sprawling over the tiller.

When they made their home port, Saint was barely sober. He took the sloop into the river in safety, however, and they dropped anchor at dusk. The captain then without a word retired to his cabin, and his crew saw no more of him until the next day but one.

When eventually the captain made his appearance on deck he found his

crew of two men and a boy waiting for him.

From their demeanor it was fairly obvious that they had been in earnest consultation while the captain was out of the way, and they had the appearance of folk who had come to a grave and weighty decision. Nevertheless, they exhibited a marked reluctance to approach him, which was natural enough, perhaps, in the circumstances. As for the captain, he threw them a sour look and spoke not a word, but stood regarding them as if to challenge an utterance on their part; an attitude which, if anything, increased their embarrassment and timidity.

At length one of the men stepped forward, touched his hat and shuffled his feet. Then he recited a monologue that had been obviously well learned by heart beforehand.

"All bein' accordin' to Articles, Cap'n Saint, and seeing as how we, the crew of the *Holy Apostle* 'ere mustered, whereby we, the aforesaid crew, with all respects as doo, 'aving regard to the said Articles, would like to put to you, Cap'n Saint, certain observations, to wit, as follows."

HERE the man paused to recover his breath, which had been gradually leaving him until at the end of his speech, he had somewhat the appearance of a deflated balloon. The captain, who had been eyeing him with growing distaste, now broke out into an explosion of wrath.

"Hell get ye! What sea lawyer's jargon is this? Get to the point, man, and be done with this nonsense. What d'ye want with me?"

The captain's attitude was menacing, and its intimidating effect on the man was obvious. Nevertheless he stuck his ground. Taking a deep breath, he began again:

"It's these 'ere men we left behind on the Flyin' Jib, Cap'n—Josh Erling and Sam Speight. What we, the crew 'ere mustered—" he sidled round to indicate that all were included in the phrase—"what we would like to know is what are you goin' to do, Cap'n Saint, about them two men as we left ashore way back there on the Flyin' Jib? With all respects as doo, Cap'n, seein' as 'ow them two men be nakid and destitoot, and no victuals and no shelter to speak of, we, the aforesaid crew of the *Holy Apostle,* 'opes and demands as 'ow you'll put to sea with no delay, barrin' shippin' stores, and make that there island and take off them two marooned mariners, if so be as they're still alive, which God preserve 'em."

On this the captain altered his tone somewhat.

"And who said I wasn't going to look for 'em?" he said in quieter tones. "Look ye here, my lad. There's no need for you to go making a song ashore. I'll make for the island again when I think it suitable, and if they're alive, why, I'll take 'em off. Does that suit ye?"

The man was silent for a space. Then the other man nudged his elbow and whispered in his ear. He turned to the captain.

"Will you swear, Cap'n Saint," he said solemnly, "that them two men was *alive* when you left the Flyin' Jib?"

The captain dismissed the question with impatient disdain.

"How am I to swear if I never saw 'em?"

"The island ain't so big. You can walk all round it in a couple of hours. Do you swear you never saw those men?"

"The devil take you!" roared the captain, now purple with passion. "Get for'ard where you belong or, damme, I'll knock ye both flat on the deck with a handspike."

He turned round and made a hasty move toward the back of the cabin skylight. Suddenly he tottered. To their amazement the men saw his jaw drop. He swung round, gave them a glassy stare and then collapsed on the deck. Captain Saint had been seized by a paralytic stroke.

CHAPTER II

THE DRUNKEN MARINER AT THE THREE CROWNS TAVERN

THE first mate of the *Hannah Johnson,* a pink-stern, stepped from a boat on to the steps adjoining Customs House Wharf, London, and made his way briskly toward Tower Hill. It was a fine evening in the late Summer, and comparative quiet reigned over the shipping moored in the Pool and on the wharves alongside the river. Business was over for the day; few people were about, and the footsteps of the solitary pedestrian echoed in the narrow and cobbled thoroughfares through which he passed.

David Waters was a man of middle height and broad of shoulder, but exhibiting by the elasticity of his movements rather than by the girth of his body a strength that was much above the average. His dress and his carriage bespoke the seaman. He looked slightly older than his years—he was no more than thirty—but his features were well formed, and his countenance was pleasing by virtue of a manly ruggedness that told of a rough existence through which a kindly nature had nevertheless managed to survive.

David Waters had spent a large part of his life at sea. Bred in an orphanage in the Midlands of England, he had run away at the age of twelve to escape the brutality of the schoolmaster. A few weeks afterward he had found himself in London, penniless and without a friend in the world. He had the good fortune to be taken under the protection of a kindly bookseller of Eastcheap named Roger Keen, and he had resided with his benefactor for a number of years. At the age of seventeen he was induced by Keen's brother, who was a master mariner, to sail with him as his apprentice. Waters had taken to the sea readily, and from that time onward he had pursued the calling with not a little fondness and with unvarying devotion.

Turning into a small thoroughfare close to the Minories, Waters crossed the road to enter a tavern called the Three Crowns. As he approached the door he heard fragments of a song which came, apparently, from inside the parlor. The words of the song were bawled in a cracked and tuneless voice and sounded as if they came from the throat of a very tipsy person. In a tavern much frequented by seafaring folk there was nothing remarkable, of course, in this circumstance, and Waters paid little heed as he entered.

Some eight or nine persons occupied the room. Most of them were seafaring men, or men whose occupation brought them into contact with ships and their cargoes; but there was also one with whom Waters was acquainted—a neighbor of his friend Keen—whose business was that of ironmonger.

The unmelodious song that Waters had heard ceased just as he entered the room. The noise had come from a man of middle height, who sat in a sprawling attitude on a bench in the corner. He was about twenty-eight or thirty years of age. His countenance was pale and shining with sweat, and his skin looked unhealthy. His eyes were glassy and his expression vacuous. His jaw hung loose and from the corners of his mouth saliva slowly trickled. A three cornered hat was pushed to the back of his head, and from under it there hung downward to the level of his eyes and well over his ears a quantity of straight but disordered hair. The young man was not very clean, and he was obviously very drunk.

Shortly after Waters had entered the room the man began to bawl a number of meaningless ejaculations—sentences with no beginning and no end—which revealed the fact, to any one who cared to listen, that he was a seafaring man, or at all events that he had spent a considerable time on the sea. No one paid any heed to his vaporings, however, but this was a circumstance that did not have the effect of repressing him in the least. Suddenly he sat upright and

waved his arm as though to command attention.

"Damme, I'm no coastwise sailor, I'm not. I know the Indies better'n I know Wapping. Five years ago I sailed with Cap'n Sennett. No quarter and no tales told."

No one made any reply.

"Look ye here," he shouted. "Did ye never hear of Cap'n Matt Sennett? No tales told and no questions asked!"

Suddenly he broke out into a peal of senseless laughter.

"No questions asked! That's a good 'un. No questions asked, eh? Who wants to ask questions o' dead men?"

Waters turned a questioning glance to his friend the ironmonger.

"He's been here these three nights past," said his friend. "He's always like that; drunk and boasting. And what things he talks of! Shocking things. Laying aboard and cutting open of gizzards; and marooning, whatever that might be. It's my opinion he's no honest sailor."

"A rogue, seemingly," replied Waters. "Or maybe he's only a fool seeking attention through his drunken ravings."

"Well, I don't know about that," said the ironmonger. "But last night he said something about the *Delaware*. You remember the *Delaware* that was brought into Plymouth by a King's ship a couple of months ago?"

Waters nodded. The mutiny in the *Delaware* had been the talk of London about the time of which his friend spoke. It was said that the mutineers were pirates; but none of them were caught, and the affair had been something of a mystery ever since.

MEANWHILE the fellow in the corner had modified his bellowing and was now muttering in quieter tones:

"He knocked me flat with a pannikin, he did. 'It ain't cleaned out proper,' says he. 'Scrub it, my lad, or I'll scrub your naked liver,' says he. Sennett was a devil when he took his liquor. But I warn't afeared o' Sennett; God strike me dead, I warn't."

He then mumbled in mournful tones:

"'Gunter,' says he, 'you're a damn useless son of a slush bucket. You're the worst stooard as I ever sailed with. You ain't worth your salt, damme. Jump to it, my lad, or I'll tip ye to the sharks, blast me if I don't!' But I warn't never afeard o' Sennett. No, not when he took his liquor, I warn't. All of 'em was dead afeard o' Sennett, but not me."

He staggered to his feet and lurched across the floor. Suddenly he caught sight of Waters and looked him hard in the face.

"Why, it's Agua Dick, burn me if it ain't," he cried. "Agua Dick come aboard to see his old shipmate."

He staggered against a chair and managed with difficulty to save himself from falling. He swayed from side to side and eventually steadied himself by holding on to the back of the chair. Then he fixed his watery eyes on the man before him.

"Where's the guineas that ought to be busting our pockets, eh?"

He turned his head and waved his arm to the other occupants of the room.

"Agua Dick'll tell ye. Hundred and fifty thousand and more—just slipped through our fingers all through the devil's own luck. We'd be riding in our carriages now only for the devil's luck and the King's men, blast 'em."

Waters said nothing, but eyed the fellow up and down. He on his part noted the cool attitude of Waters and he at once changed his tone.

"You won't recognize an old shipmate? What've I done to ye? I've always been a good shipmate, I have. Me, Simon Gunter. They can't say as I ever took a mite as wasn't me due. They can't prove it that I did. Always stood by me shipmates and never took more than was due to me; no one can prove as I did. When we was aboard the *Joker*, you called me a thieving mongrel. But I never took more'n me due; I

never did. You and no one else can't prove it."

At that moment two men came in from the street; one of them was thickset and heavily built. He looked in the direction of the landlord of the tavern, who was standing at the door leading to an adjoining room. The landlord saw him at once and nodded his head slightly in the direction of the drunken mariner. Immediately the two newcomers stepped up to the drunkard and the thickset man grasped him by the shoulder.

"Here, I want you," he said.

"Eh?" the fellow gasped.

"Grab his other arm," said the man who held him.

The two men each seized an arm, while they prevented him from struggling, the broad shouldered one ran his hands through the pockets of the prisoner for the purpose of discovering possible hidden weapons. He found nothing, however, and the prisoner made no resistance whatsoever. Indeed, judging from his appearance, he was totally incapable of resistance. He seemed to shrivel up. His face betrayed the most abject fear, and as he mumbled a weak protest his eyes filled with tears.

"Not me, mister," he whined. "It ain't me you want. I'm a Godfearing mariner, I am. I ain't no pickeroon. A Godfearing subject o' good King George. S'elp me, I am."

They paid no heed to his protests, but led him toward the street. As they were leading him away, he turned his face toward Waters.

"Don't let 'em get me, Agua," he implored. "Stand by me, shipmate. Tell 'em I ain't no pickeroon. You knows me."

His captors stopped, and one of them released his hold and approached Waters. He eyed him up and down for a few moments.

"And who might you be?" he said in a very gruff voice.

For the moment Waters was somewhat taken aback. With the arrest of the man who had called himself Gunter he had neither interest nor concern. Regarding the cause of his apprehension, he thought he could make a pretty good guess, although he had no certain knowledge of what the man had done. The fellow's impudent claim to his acquaintance, however, had clearly placed him under the suspicion of these officers; and his inability to clear himself on the spur of the moment seemed likely to place him in an awkward situation.

The landlord, however, came at once to his rescue. He explained to the officers that Waters was well known to him. With this testimony the thief catcher had to be satisfied. It was with seeming reluctance, however, that he turned away.

"I shall know you again," he said with a last look at Waters.

CHAPTER III

LAWYER HARDMUTH'S COMMUNICATION

IT WAS nearly three months after the affair in the Three Crowns that Waters landed once more in the port of London and paid his usual visit to his friend Keen. Keen was out when he arrived, but he found a letter waiting for him. It was addressed "care of Mr. Roger Keen" and came from an attorney named Peter Hardmuth, of Gray's Inn. It stated briefly that if Mr. David Waters cared to visit Mr. Hardmuth at his chambers he might learn something to his advantage.

On the following morning Waters went to the address in Gray's Inn and inquired for Mr. Hardmuth. After waiting a few minutes a clerk requested him to follow him. He led Waters to the end of a passage on the ground floor of the building and knocked on a door.

"Come in," said a deep voice.

The clerk opened the door and Waters entered the room. Seated at a table was a prosperous looking man of middle age with a heavy jaw and piercing gray eyes.

"Mr. Hardmuth?" inquired Waters.

The man rose to his feet without replying and looked his visitor in the face. Doubtless, being a lawyer of much practise, Mr. Hardmuth was skilled as any man in the art of controlling his emotions, yet if ever there was blank amazement written on the countenance of a man it was on the face of Lawyer Hardmuth at that moment. Nor was the emotion registered solely in his looks.

"Eh?" he said at last. "Why, bless my soul!"

Waters was at a loss to account for this strange reception from a man who could hardly have seen him before in his life, and for a moment he looked at the lawyer without replying.

"Excuse me, sir," he said at length. "I don't remember having seen you before. Do you happen to know me by sight?"

"Pray forgive me," said Hardmuth at once. "And tell me whom I have the honor of addressing."

"My name is Waters. David Waters."

On hearing the name Hardmuth gave another perceptible start of surprise, but this time he had his emotions more under control, and his voice as he bade his visitor be seated was suave and even.

He unlocked a drawer in his table and drew forth a packet of papers. These he untied and spread out on the table before him as he seated himself.

"So you are David Waters?" he said.

"Yes."

"Where were you born?"

"At San Fernando in the Spanish colonies of America."

"You had a brother?" The lawyer looked at Waters narrowly as he asked the question.

"So I have been told," he replied. "But I never saw him. His name was Richard."

Hardmuth nodded.

"What else do you know about your birth and early life? Your father and mother—?"

"My father was a master mariner. He was lost at sea together with his ship about the time of my birth. I never knew the exact circumstances—"

"Never mind that. About your mother—what do you know of her?"

"I never saw her. She died, I believe, when I was about six months old. It was at the time when the buccaneers raided San Fernando. You've heard of the massacre of the innocents of San Fernando?"

Hardmuth nodded.

"My brother Richard, together with other infants, was taken as hostage by the buccaneer Collot. I was hidden away by a negro woman. And so I escaped. But my baby brother was killed, so they tell me, and my mother disappeared at the same time. She was never heard of again."

"What became of you?"

"I was taken to Cartagena, where I was cared for by a Spanish widow. I lived with her until she died. I was then brought to England by the master of a trading ship."

"How old were you then?"

"Between five and six years old."

"And so you know nothing about your mother—only what you've told me?"

"Only what I've told you. Only what I've been told myself."

"You never heard definitely about your mother's death? You never heard where she died?"

"That is so. But I have always believed that my mother died at the hands of the buccaneers."

The lawyer glanced at a paper before him. Then he said:

"I have no doubt that you are David Waters and, that being so, I have a communication of the greatest importance to make to you. The documents which I have here—you shall read them in a few moments—were sent to me by an attorney of Charleston in the American Colony of South Carolina. From them you will learn that your mother died at that place about twenty-six years ago; that is about three years after the time she was alleged to have disappeared from San Fernando.

"Some time during those three years

she appears to have been married to a certain Matthew Saint, who afterward became a citizen of Charleston, and it is on his behalf that these documents were sent to me. Matthew Saint is therefore your stepfather, and I am instructed to say that he has made a will leaving his entire property to you. I can not give you any details with regard to this property, but I am given to understand that it is very considerable."

FOR some time Waters did not speak. His face showed how greatly the lawyer's tidings had amazed him.

"You mean to say," he said at last, "that this Matthew Saint has made me his heir? Why, I never heard of him."

"Maybe not; but he is your stepfather nevertheless."

"Is, you say? He is still living then?"

"I can only say that he was alive when that communication was addressed to me. That was four months ago. I gather, however, that he was mighty sick then. We may infer from this letter that he had not very long to live."

He handed the papers across the table.

"Read them at your leisure," he said, "and then come and see me again. But I would advise you to lose no time in securing a passage to America. Your presence in Charleston is highly desirable in your own interests. Go there and get into touch with Mr. Garner—that is the attorney. I'll give you a letter to give to him. Come and see me again as soon as convenient to you and, if you wish, I'll arrange a passage for you as early as possible."

Waters was so taken aback by the tidings which Hardmuth had given him that he forgot to ask him the reason for his strange behavior when he entered the room. The astonishment that he had seen in the face of the lawyer could hardly have been greater had a dead man stood up and confronted him.

And when he came to reflect on it Hardmuth was not the first stranger who had behaved in a surprising manner toward him. There was that foolish steward, Gunter, who had claimed him as a shipmate in the Three Crowns Tavern three months back. True, Gunter was very drunk at the time and may have seen shipmates by the score in his tipsy mind. Nevertheless the two incidents were not a little surprising.

Waters was not long in making up his mind to go to Charleston. On the following day but one he visited the attorney again to instruct him to arrange a passage in an outward bound merchantman. On this occasion he had to wait a considerable time before being admitted to Hardmuth's presence.

The lawyer was busily engaged with a number of persons in connection with a notable criminal trial that was proceeding at the Old Bailey at that time. While Waters was away on his last voyage four men had been apprehended on a charge of piracy and murder in connection with the *Delaware* mutiny and lodged in Newgate Prison. Their trial was the outcome of the arrest of the steward Simon Gunter, whose foolish boasting had put the authorities on the track of the criminals.

After waiting about three-quarters of an hour, the clerk informed Waters that Mr. Hardmuth was free to attend to him. As he approached the door of the lawyer's room a man came along the passage to pass out of the street door. He was fairly tall with pale grayish blue eyes and a noticeable squint. As soon as he saw Waters he gave a perceptible start and stopped his progress. He opened his mouth to speak, but said nothing. Waters stopped also, as he thought the man had something to communicate to him. Finding that he did not speak, he passed on, but he observed that the man continued to gaze after him.

Lawyer Hardmuth was standing at his door, and Waters gathered that the man with the squint had just left him.

Hardmuth had, in fact, only just let him out. After greeting the lawyer Waters nodded backward in the direction of the street door.

"That fellow that passed out as I entered—" he said. "Do you know him?"

"A client of mine," replied the lawyer briefly.

"He seemed to know me," said Waters. And then as he recollected the peculiar behavior of the lawyer himself on the occasion of his last visit he added, "And that reminds me that you yourself seemed to mistake me for somebody else when you first saw me."

Hardmuth nodded but did not reply at once.

"You are remarkably like some one else," he said at last. "A remarkable likeness; most remarkable. Have you heard of Agua Richards?"

"To be sure I have," said Waters. "Now standing his trial for piracy at the Old Bailey. The *Delaware* mutiny."

"Right."

"He's like me, you say?"

"Remarkably so. I could have sworn to your being the same person."

"Then that accounts for a great deal," said Waters. "A man named Gunter claimed my acquaintance in a tavern. An accomplice of this Agua Richards, I suppose?"

The lawyer nodded.

"Well, an acquaintance, shall we say."

"Will Richards hang?"

"That I can't say."

"And this fellow with the squint? Is he in the swim also?"

"My dear fellow," replied the lawyer, placing his hand on Waters' shoulder, "the gentleman, as I've told you, is my client. His affairs are in my keeping. You'll not think me discourteous, I'm sure, if I can not discuss them with you."

Waters hastened to apologize to the lawyer. But at the same time he could not help but speculate on the strange circumstances of his resemblance to one who, to say the least, kept very ill company, if indeed he were not himself a pirate and a murderer.

Hardmuth was not long in securing him a passage. In a few days he was able to notify him that he had secured a berth in the *Governor of the Indies*, which was due to leave the Thames in a fortnight's time.

CHAPTER IV

A TRIAL AT THE OLD BAILEY

THE morning was cold and cheerless with the breath of late Autumn, but sweat streamed down the eager faces of a considerable crowd of people who struggled and crushed each other against the walls of the passage that led to the spectators' gallery of the Old Bailey. A trial of no ordinary interest and importance was about to take place within the walls of that building of somber memories.

Robert Mellor, Martin Hack, Samuel Cato and Richard Richards—better known as Agua Richards, or Agua Dick—were on trial for piracy and murder on the high seas. The arrest of these four men in connection with the mutiny in the *Delaware* had reawakened the popular interest in that mysterious event to something like fever heat.

Of the prisoners three looked unashamedly scared. Two of these three were Englishmen; the third was a mulatto or halfcaste. At the beginning their faces were turned fearfully in the direction of the judge, as if they expected him to sentence them to the gallows out of hand. When the counsel for the Crown stood up, they turned their eyes toward him, at first with a kind of wonder in them. Afterward, when they began to understand that the tale of their villainy was being unfolded, their faces once more sought the person of the judge in anticipation of the dread sentence which they seemed to expect would fall from his lips at any moment.

The fourth prisoner, whose name was Richards, was clearly of another stamp.

Of middle height and breadth, upstanding and muscular, and of countenance not ill looking, his presence in that tribunal did not seem to occasion him the least apprehension. Rather he seemed to regard himself as quite immune from any danger. His eyes roamed the court with a kind of bravado, and when they encountered those of another person, whether counsel, juryman or spectator, they returned the gaze with insolent challenge.

His age, one would have guessed, was in the early thirties. There was something about the appearance of Agua Richards that told one he was in no circumstances to be trifled with, and one felt that, whether he was innocent or guilty of the crime with which he was charged, he would not answer to judgment with faltering lips.

When the counsel opened the case for the Crown Richards turned his glance slowly toward him and inclined his head slightly to one side, displaying the sort of critical attention one might accord to an interesting but not too exciting play.

The learned counsel spread out some papers before him with a swift gesture, whispered a word or two in the ear of a colleague who sat beside him, and then proceeded to recount in evenly modulated tones one of the grimmest tales of treachery and bloodshed ever recorded of the sea.

"It may be within your recollection," he said, "that five months ago, on the twenty-eighth of June to be precise, his Majesty's sloop-of-war *Tatler* brought into Plymouth Sound the full rigged ship *Delaware*. None of the original crew was on board that ship; it was manned and worked into harbor by a number of men drawn from the complement of the man-of-war. I am going to tell you the circumstances in which this fine ship came to be taken in charge and brought to this country by the officer commanding one of his Majesty's warships and all the events, so far as they are known to us, which led to her abandonment by her crew.

"The *Delaware* left Hampton Roads in the Colony of Virginia on the tenth of April last. She was a large full rigged ship of 325 tons burden, well found and manned by a crew of forty-four all told. The master was Thomas Wheelwright, the first mate Edmund Skinner, and the second mate Seth Carter. Besides the crew she carried four passengers: Philip Brant, Josephine Brant—his daughter—Major Charles Sambor and Richard Richards. The *Delaware* carried a rich cargo of value estimated at £165,000 sterling. She was well armed for defense and carried ten bronze cannon besides an adequate store of muskets, pikes and cutlasses.

"NOW before I tell you what happened on the voyage, I want to say a few words about the crew. Not less than twenty of them were recruited in the port of Norfolk, Virginia, where the cargo was taken on board, and I will show you in due course that most of them, if not all of them, were well known to each other before they joined the ship.

"I will bring evidence to prove that the seizure of the ship and its cargo by these men was deliberately plotted beforehand. I will let you hear in due course what some of these men were overheard to say several days before their wicked acts were consummated, which will leave no doubt in your minds that these acts were in no way spontaneous, but were the outcome of a wicked scheme that was to include the wholesale murder of all those who were not in their councils.

"The conversation to which I refer took place on the upper deck at a late hour. Three men took part in it; one of them was the prisoner Mellor; another was the prisoner Richards.

"The witnesses who will testify before you will include John Hart, a loyal member of the crew who suffered grievously for his loyalty, Josephine Brant, one of the passengers in the ship, and whose testimony, therefore, should be beyond

any shadow of suspicion, and Simon Gunter, who was the cabin steward of the ship. The last named of these witnesses who, as I have said, was no more than a humble steward, was able to move freely among the villains. They made repeated attempts to seduce his loyalty, but the faithful fellow was proof against their blandishments and, while according them a seeming allegiance, he was careful to note all the circumstances that came under his observation and store them in his memory, so that he might at some future time be in a position to testify what he knew for the noble cause of Justice."

The Crown attorney made an impressive pause at this point before proceeding with his narrative:

"On the twenty-fifth day of May the *Delaware* sighted and spoke his Majesty's ship *Tatler,* which was homeward bound from Jamaica. On the twenty-ninth the ship anchored in Fayal Roads for the purpose of taking on board a few items of cargo and for the master to transact some business ashore. She remained at anchor in Fayal Roads for three days. On the morning of the first of June she weighed anchor and departed. That night at half past eleven o'clock something happened to put the ship temporarily off her course.

"We need not concern ourselves with what that circumstance was, but it appears that the helmsman was in some manner at fault, and the officer in charge of the watch—it was Mr. Thomas Skinner, the first mate—had occasion to reprimand him. An altercation followed, in the course of which Mr. Skinner struck the man. Thereupon it appears that two of the crew who were on deck intervened and there resulted a considerable disturbance.

"Now mark what followed. Some of the men, who were off duty and were supposed to be asleep in their hammocks below deck, immediately hurried on to the upper deck and made their way to the wheel. Perceiving Mr. Skinner standing near the wheel, they thereupon threw themselves upon him. There was the noise of a scuffle, some blows were struck, and then the voice of Skinner was heard to exclaim—

" 'The villains—they've killed me!'

"Those were the last words that the unfortunate man uttered. His head was battered in with handspikes, which are heavy rods of timber shod with brass. Two of the men who struck Mr. Skinner have been identified as the prisoners Mellor and Cato. Immediately after the murder Mellor was heard to say—

" 'Now we'll settle the captain and Carter and the ship is ours.'

"Mr. Carter, I may remind you, was the second mate.

"Then the outrage began in earnest. Captain Wheelwright, Major Sambor and Mr. Brant were brutally murdered as they rushed on deck, aroused by the untimely disturbance. And then there followed a grisly stalk of every loyal member of the ship's company, ending in their deaths. But two escaped: John Hart and Simon Gunter, the steward.

"All the time these shocking events were taking place the prisoner Richards, together with the other surviving passenger, Josephine Brant, remained in the great cabin. Miss Brant was naturally terribly alarmed at the turn of events, and especially was she anxious for the safety of her father. She will tell you that she was prevented by Richards from going to her father, or indeed from leaving the cabin at all. She never saw her father again. She will tell you that when the mutineers attempted to enter the cabin Richards dissuaded them and they departed.

"Richards' life was not taken by the mutineers. No harm was done to him whatsoever. No harm to him appears to have been even contemplated. Quite the contrary! You will hear how Richards behaved toward the ringleaders of the mutiny and how they behaved toward him. You will be able to determine how far Richards was their confederate and how deeply he was involved in their schemes.

"The life of Josephine Brant was spared. There seems to be no doubt that she owed her life to the influence that Richards had over these miscreants. Imagine the terrible position of this unfortunate young lady in the midst of a gang of red handed murderers, who had already brutally done to death her father. She remained at the mercy of these vile and unspeakable men. More than all, she was at the mercy of Richards who, while affecting to protect her, held her in a subjection such as she had no power to resist.

"She will, in due course, describe to you the relations between Richards and certain of the mutineers such as she was able to observe. You will have also in this connection the testimony of the faithful steward, Gunter, who was in a position to observe the prisoner many times after the mutiny.

"And so, gentlemen, the mutineers gained possession of the ship and, with the few exceptions that I have already stated, they slaughtered every soul who was not their confederate; all the officers and every member of the crew excepting the faithful steward, Gunter, whom the ringleader designed to make their own servant, and the sailor, Hart, who only escaped by hiding after suffering grievous hurt; all the passengers, excepting only Richards, who I will prove was privy to their designs, and Josephine Brant, who was saved through the influence of Richards.

"For the whole of the next day and the following night the mutineers remained unmolested in the possession of the ship. At daybreak on the second morning, however, there appeared once more his Majesty's ship *Tatler*. When the sun arose the *Tatler* was less than five miles away. The mutineers at once tried to make off, but their movements aroused the suspicions of the captain of the warship, and he determined to give chase. The pursuit was very close, but the warship gradually overhauled the *Delaware*, and the mutineers, finding they could not otherwise get away, ran for the island of Santa Maria, one of the Azores group, which was not very far distant.

"When close inshore on the lee side of the island the mutineers one and all, including Richards, mark you, got into the boats and, taking the faithful steward also with them, rowed ashore and so made their escape. The passenger Josephine Brant was left on board and also the sailor, Hart, of whose presence in the ship the mutineers were not then aware."

SUCH, in a somewhat condensed form, was the story which the counsel for the Crown unfolded before a silent and most attentive audience. Witnesses were then called by the prosecution.

The sailor, Hart, who had survived the general massacre, stated he was on the upper deck during the first watch, and he witnessed the altercation at the wheel that resulted in the death of the first mate. He identified the prisoners Mellor and Cato as two of the men who had struck the mate, and swore that Mellor had uttered the words, "Now we'll do for the captain and Carter and the ship is ours." He stated that he had remained hidden in the forepeak for two days, and had managed to crawl out when the ship was in the possession of the *Tatler's* men.

One of the most important of the witnesses was Simon Gunter. The steward looked a trifle pale as he stood up to give his evidence. He gave one glance in the direction of the prisoners, but, catching the eye of Richards fixed on him with a baleful glare, he quickly turned away his head and looked no more in that direction. At first, in answer to the questions addressed to him, he spoke haltingly and with apparent difficulty; but lulled to a greater ease by the persuasive and friendly tones of the examining counsel, he overcame his fear bit by bit. At length he gave his evidence with an air of impudent jauntiness.

He described the murder of the cap-

tain, the second mate and the two passengers, and he identified the prisoner Cato as one of those who stabbed the captain. He also swore that Cato had beaten out the brains of the carpenter. He described the atrocious treatment meted out to Haley, the gunner, and he swore that the prisoners Hack and Cato both lent a hand in that act.

With regard to his own movements during the mutiny, and the reason for his being on the upper deck, Gunter told a glib story that the Crown lawyer affected to believe. He stated that he went on the upper deck fearing some harm might come to the captain, to whom he was much attached, hoping to be of assistance in protecting him.

"But he was killed before I could raise a hand," he added. "And Mr. Brant and the major just afterwards. I couldn't do anything; there was too many of 'em. So I gets on to the poop and lays down there, hoping the men would come to their senses."

From the poop, he stated, he witnessed the murder of the carpenter, the boatswain and the gunner.

Asked what his position was after the mutiny, he stated that he continued his duties as well as he could.

"As steward?"

"As steward."

"On behalf of those who occupied the great cabin?"

"Yes."

Asked who had occupied the great cabin after the mutiny, he replied that Mellor with two other mutineers had lived aft; also the prisoner Richards and the lady passenger.

"Was Mellor in general command?"

"No."

"Could he name the person who took charge of the ship?"

He could not remember his name. He could not remember if he had ever heard it. He would know him if he saw him. He did not see him in the court.

He had seen Richards talking to the mutineers in the great cabin often, but he had not heard what was said. Richards had seemed to be friendly with them; very friendly.

He swore that he himself had taken no part in the revolt.

Asked whether he had any knowledge beforehand of any intention on the part of the mutineers to seize the ship, he replied that he had not.

"Did Richards speak to you at all after the mutiny?" asked the lawyer.

"Yes, often."

"Did Richards at any time tell you that he had been mate of the *Joker* brig?"

"Yes; he said that."

"He told you that he had been a pirate?"

"Yes."

"Thank you, Mr. Gunter. That is all."

The steward turned hastily to leave, but a gentleman called Mr. Adolphus Hare stood up quickly and extended an arm toward him.

"Just a few moments, Mr. Gunter," he said.

Mr. Hare had a number of questions to ask the steward. In reply Gunter stated he had often seen Richards in the cabin after the mutiny. He had not seen him take any part in the mutiny. So far as he knew, he had remained in the cabin. He had not heard the mutineers threaten to kill Richards; had not heard them threaten him in any way.

He was very much attached to Captain Wheelwright. The captain had been very kind to him. The captain had never kicked him off the poop. He may have kicked him *on* the poop. The captain did not habitually call him names. He did so now and again; not very often. He could not recollect that the captain had called him a lying and worthless scamp.

He did not know anything about the *Joker* brig; only what Richards had told him. He had not himself served in the *Joker* brig; certainly not. He did not know Matthew Sennett; had heard of him, of course.

The mutineers had compelled him to go ashore with them at Santa Maria.

He left them as soon as he was able. They hadn't harmed him in any way.

After Mr. Hare had finished, a gentleman, who was acting on behalf of the prisoners Mellor, Hack and Cato, stood up and asked a lot of questions relative to the happenings on the upper deck during the night of the revolt. Although he badgered the steward mercilessly, he was unable to shake the testimony to any material degree.

It was noticed that Mr. Gunter had lost a good deal of his jauntiness by the time he stood down. The conclusion of his cross-examination brought the proceedings to an end for the day.

CHAPTER V

JOSEPHINE BRANT'S STORY

"I CALL Josephine Brant."

The announcement of the prosecuting counsel brought forth from the body of the court a low buzzing which rose in a sustained crescendo to something approaching a mild uproar as the officials at the door stood aside to allow the entry of this new witness. The noise ceased abruptly and profound silence reigned in its stead when the figure of Josephine Brant was seen to emerge.

The spectators saw a slim girl of medium height, not much more than twenty years of age, fair haired and possessing a countenance on which there sat traces of a not far distant tragedy. Apart from the somewhat troubled expression of a pair of reflective eyes, her general demeanor showed her to be far from her ease; and as she stood up in that somber courtroom, in the midst of the austere servants and emblems of the law, she looked friendless and a trifle forlorn.

She repeated the words of the oath somewhat after the manner of a child repeating a lesson. She spoke with a slight provincial accent. Her tones, however, were musical, and the curious and unfamiliar cadences which she imparted to some of the words sounded rather pleasing than otherwise. Having taken the oath, she fixed her eyes on the judge with an expression in which naiveté was mixed with a slight tinge of fear.

When the counsel began to question her she turned her eyes wide opened to him and kept them on his face nearly all through his examination.

"Miss Brant," he addressed her in a friendly tone, "you were a passenger in the *Delaware?*"

"I was."

"The prisoner Richards was also with you a passenger in the ship?"

"Yes."

"And naturally you became fairly well acquainted with him during the voyage?"

"Yes. I got to know him fairly well."

"Now, Miss Brant, will you tell us what you saw on the night of the twenty-sixth of May, while the *Delaware* was at sea?"

"I left my cabin and went on to the upper deck—" she began.

"Now tell us what you saw."

"I saw the prisoner Richards sitting on a hatch talking to two of the crew."

"Did you recognize these two men of the crew?"

"Yes. I knew them by sight."

"Look upon the prisoners in the dock. Do you see one of those men now?"

"Yes."

"Who was it?"

"That man." She pointed to Mellor.

"You heard something that was said. Will you tell us all you heard?"

"Mellor said, 'Why not tonight?' And then Richards said, 'Don't be a fool. Do you want to send us all to Execution Dock? The *Tatler* is barely hull down. Wait till we get to Fayal.' "

"Anything more?"

"The other man—I don't remember his name—asked when we would arrive at Fayal. Richards said, 'In about three or four days.' "

"Did Richards say something about the value of the cargo?"

"Yes. He said it was worth more than

a hundred and fifty thousand pounds."

"Did Richards say something to one of the men about not speaking too loudly, that he did not wish them to be overheard?"

"Yes. He said, 'Not so loud; we don't want all the ship's company to hear.'"

"None of these men saw you on the deck?"

"They could not have."

In reply to some questions regarding the events on the night of the first of June she said she had not seen any one killed. She had remained in the great cabin. Richards had prevented her from leaving. He had not offered her any violence. It was Richards who had told her that her father had been killed.

She then described the man who had taken command of the ship after mutiny. He was rather above middle height, with dark and rather straggling hair and a cast in one eye. She had heard him referred to as Captain Dench, but she had often heard him addressed as Nick.

"You saw a good deal of Richards after the mutiny, did you not?" asked the lawyer.

"Yes."

"Did you see him holding any communication with the mutineers?"

"I did, often."

"Did he appear to you to be very friendly with them?"

"Yes, very friendly."

"You say you often heard the chief of the mutineers addressed as Nick?"

"Yes."

"Did you ever hear the prisoner Richards address him that way?"

"Yes, often."

"He appeared to you to be friendly and familiar with him?"

"Yes."

"Now, Miss Brant, from what you observed after the mutiny, have you any doubt that Richards was in league with the mutineers?"

"I have no doubt whatever."

"That is all, Miss Brant."

Her cross-examination by Mr. Adolphus Hare was severe and prolonged, but he was unable to shake her testimony as she had given it. She admitted, however, that it was Richards who kept the mutineers from entering the big cabin, where she had remained throughout the massacre on deck; and she told of an affront offered her by one of the men after the mutiny.

"And Richards interfered to protect you?"

"Yes."

"Did he strike the man?"

"He knocked him down and kicked him several times."

Mr. Adolphus Hare intimated that he had no more questions to ask, and sat down.

The Crown advocate then asked the witness if the mutineer whom Richards had knocked down had ventured to retaliate in any way. She replied that he was in no condition to do so.

"Were any of the other mutineers present or within view of the affair?" he asked her.

"Yes, several," she replied.

"Did any of them interfere on behalf of their shipmate?"

"No."

"Richards violently assaulted this man and no harm was offered to him by any one?"

"None whatever."

"No one even threatened to do him any harm?"

"No."

Mr. Adolphus Hare, in addressing the jury on behalf of Richards, scorned the contention that Richards was privy to the plot or an accomplice in its execution.

"What evidence have we in support of that contention?" he asked. "We have the fact that Richards was not murdered by the mutineers as were his fellow passengers Brant and Sambor. Will you condemn a man because he has had the good fortune to escape being killed? Josephine Brant wasn't killed. The steward Gunter wasn't killed. Were they accomplices?"

With this and much more in the same strain, Mr. Adolphus Hare endeavored to impress the jury with the generous virtues of the man whose cause he was defending.

The fact that Richards went ashore with the mutineers, he asserted, was due to compulsion on the part of the mutineers exactly as it was in the case of Gunter, according to the statement of the prosecution. If Richards were guilty on that score then Gunter was guilty also.

There remained the conversation which Josephine Brant alleged she overheard between Richards and the two sailors prior to the mutiny. This was a harder nut for the lawyer's teeth. He, however, laid stress on the fact that Miss Brant was at least eight or ten yards from the men whose conversation she stated she overheard. In that case, he pointed out, the alleged plotters must have been shouting the details of their schemes for all and sundry to hear.

"What men," he said, "would talk openly about a plot so dangerous to themselves in its execution, so fraught with fatal consequences to themselves in case of failure? What men, I say, would shout their intentions to the winds of heaven?"

And if the conversation of these alleged plotters was not carried on in inconceivably loud tones, how could the witness be sure that she had heard aright? How could the jury be sure that she had heard aright? . . ."

To Mr. Hare's oration the jury listened with great attention, and they appeared to be not a little impressed.

IN THE hands of the Crown attorney, however, the case against Richards soon began to wear an entirely different aspect. He told the jury that in regard to the alleged conversation between Richards and the two sailors prior to the mutiny they could not doubt the evidence of Josephine Brant. The witness had no doubt that she had heard aright. And on the showing of the defense, she owed her life to the intervention of the prisoner. Even allowing that she had an animus against Richards at the time of the alleged conversation, was it conceivable that she had misrepresented to the jury that which she had heard in order to secure the conviction of the man who had saved her life? Could the jury believe that?

As for the later communication between Richards and the mutineers, the evidence had shown that he was not only ready to communicate with them but that he had all the appearance of friendliness to them. True, the defense had recalled an occasion when he had violently assaulted a mutineer who had offered an affront to Josephine Brant; but did not this incident itself prove that he was a person of influence among them?

He ridiculed the assertion that Richards had been taken ashore at Santa Maria by the mutineers against his will. Was it likely that they would encumber themselves with an unwilling prisoner while making a desperate attempt to escape? The case of Gunter, he asserted, was entirely different. Gunter was their servant, or rather their slave; he was compelled to serve them. There was not a scrap of evidence to show that Richards had ever been put to any kind of work by the mutineers. On the contrary, he seemed to have been treated always as a privileged person among them.

The case against Mellor, Hack and Cato was overwhelming. The task of the attorney who defended them was hopeless from the start.

The judge, in reviewing the evidence, inclined strongly against Richards. Regarding the other prisoners his remarks amounted almost to a charge to the jury to find them guilty. The strongest evidence against Richards was the alleged conversation between him and the two sailors on the night of the twenty-sixth of May. He told the jury that unless they believed that Josephine Brant

could have been mistaken in what she had heard then, they must believe that the prisoner was at once accessory to a conspiracy which involved murder and piracy.

It was about half past two in the afternoon when the jury retired to consider their verdict. The atmosphere of acute concentration that had hardly ever been absent throughout the trial now became sensibly relaxed. There was a general prediction on the part of the spectators that all of the prisoners would be condemned. The conviction of Mellor, Hack and Cato was a foregone conclusion. The case against Richards was not quite so strong, but there were very few who thought he could be innocent. The general attitude of the spectators toward Richards had become one of exceeding dislike. His affectation of indifference to the bloodthirsty villainy for which he was being tried had somehow the effect of exasperating them to a pitch of hatred against him. That there should be any doubt regarding his conviction annoyed them not a little. They would have rejoiced in his condemnation.

Nearly an hour had gone by and the light was beginning to fade in the courtroom when a confused scuffle and a murmuring in one corner of the room announced that the jury had returned and were about to give their verdict.

CHAPTER VI

NICHOLAS DENCH PROPOUNDS A SCHEME

"DO YOU find the prisoner guilty or not guilty?"

Robert Mellor, Martin Hack and Samuel Cato could not have expected any other answer than that which came. Yet, in each case, their countenances betrayed a wild hope that the impossible might come to pass. And in each case, when the dreaded word fell from the lips of the foreman of the jury, the countenance became immediately transformed. Hope gave way to stupefaction; stupefaction to terror.

Last came the turn of Richard Richards, called Agua, and profound was the silence that followed the judge's question to the foreman, a silence that indicated the intense interest that every one in the courtroom took in this particular verdict. The foreman hesitated for a moment or two before replying, as though he were held back by a doubt regarding the equity of the verdict he was about to proclaim. Then fixedly eyeing the judge, he thrust forward his head and, in a voice that betrayed a forced note of determination, replied—

"Not guilty, my Lord."

The silence continued for the space of three or four seconds, during which it was observed that the judge raised his eyebrows slightly with an expression of either real or feigned astonishment. Then there broke forth from the spectators' gallery a low but concentrated murmur of protest.

Richards left the Old Bailey in the jacket and waistcoat of a turnkey, wearing a borrowed wig that disguised his countenance. In the company of two turnkeys he passed unnoticed through a hostile mob of people, who looked eagerly but in vain for him, little knowing that for several minutes he was in their midst.

Having once got clear of the crowd, he made his way by a devious route to London Bridge, nearby the London site of which he was accosted by a tall man of somewhat gaunt appearance with a cast in one eye and about forty years of age. With this person Richards appeared to be well acquainted, for he greeted him at once, addressing him familiarly as Nick. Together they crossed the bridge to the Surrey side of the river and proceeded in a southeasterly direction, keeping fairly close to the river bank.

Speaking little, they eventually reached the town of Rotherhithe and turned into a small riverside tavern called the Betsy Snow. The man called Nick conducted Richards upstairs to a

small room. He ushered him inside, and then, putting his head over the banisters, he shouted to the landlord an order for a bottle of brandy and a couple of glasses. In a short time the brandy appeared and, after the landlord had withdrawn, the man called Nick closed the door and poured out two glasses full of brandy. He raised one.

"Well, Agua," said he, "you've cheated the hangman this time, and he's better off by a couple of fathom of rope. 'Twas a narrow shade you had, but a miss is as good as a mile, they say."

Richards fixed his eyes somewhat gloomily on the other man.

"A miss, true enough," he said. "But where was the sense of putting our heads under the rope by coming to England at all? Your precious scheme, whatever it might be, came near causing the whole lot of us to swing. Why that didn't happen I can't make out even now."

"Bah! that's over," said Nick. "Now see here, Dick. We put our heads under the rope by coming here, says you. Let's say we did. Then why did we come? Because we had to skin out from the Azores, and no time lost in getting away. Let's say we wanted to go back to America. Right. And how were we going to get there? Swim? Or wait for a ship to come along to offer us a passage? How long should we have waited? And where should we have been in the meantime? Guests of the governor? Pleased to make our acquaintance, eh? Gentlemen of fortune in reduced circumstances!

"No, Dick, you know as well as I do it was first chance to get away and no lagging. Then providentially, as you might say, along comes the *Northumberland* short of eight or nine hands. So you, me, Izak and Mellor and the rest ships aboard of her. What's left behind, or most of 'em, finds their way here later. They follows us all through blind affection for us, maybe, or else because they've nowhere else to go. And there we are. Well, here's to our next cruise—may the devil send us better luck!"

Richards drank his brandy without replying.

Nick set down his glass and wiped his lips.

"To our next cruise," he repeated. "And thanks be to a change of luck and certain good and honorable gentlemen here in London Town, we've not got very long to wait."

He picked up the bottle and filled the glasses again.

"In less than a fortnight you and me'll be treading the deck of as fine a brigantine as ever sailed from the port of London. A promising cruise and a worshipful company of rich and respectable merchants at the back of us. What d'ye say to that?"

"I say nothing," replied Richards decisively. "And I want to know nothing. I've finished with the trade."

"Eh? Finished with the trade? What d'ye say? You're not in your right senses, man! Now listen to what I've got to propound."

"No, no, Nick. You can save your breath. I'm not sailing. For me there's no luck to it."

"No luck to it for you? What d'ye mean? The Old Bailey hasn't shook your nerve, has it?"

"Maybe it has," replied Richards. "And if so, I care nothing about it. I've finished, I tell you. You can say I'm shook if it pleases you."

"Shook? Not you, Agua. I know you better. A week or two ashore and you'll be itching to get afloat again. I've got something good up my sleeve, I tell you. A fortnight from now you and me'll be sailing the seas in as fine a ship as you'll ever wish to see, and as good a crowd at our heels as you never sailed with in all your life before; true gentlemen of fortune, every one of 'em."

"Gentlemen of fortune, did you say?"

There was a curl of contempt about the mouth of Richards as he asked the question.

"Aye. I said gentlemen of fortune," replied the other.

Richards laughed bitterly.

"GENTLEMEN of fortune!" he repeated. "Fine gentlemen! Fine ragamuffins. Without a fourpenny piece to buy 'emselves leather to patch their wornout shoes. Afloat a swarm of measly rats a-scurrying for their lives most of the time. And ashore a-hunting round garbage heaps for a starveling livelihood. Gentlemen! Fortune! Where's the fortune? A ha'penny thrown to 'em by a drunken tinker. Where's the fortune you and I've made? God knows how many years we've been following this same golden trade, and where are we now? Worse off than ever we were when we started.

"No, Nick; the days of riches made under the flag o' fortune are gone forever—if ever they existed, which I doubt much. Can you name me a single one as has made enough to buy a rag-and-bone shop out of this golden trade? Can you?"

"Can I? You stake your soul I can. Did you never hear of Sennett's Haul?"

"I've heard all about Sennett's Haul. Who hasn't heard about it?"

"You know all about it, eh? D'ye know what became of it?"

"I don't. Does any one know? Do you?"

"Maybe I do. Maybe I've learnt a lot since you were under lock and key."

Richards looked hard at the other man. He had lost his reckless air of indifference. In spite of himself he displayed a marked interest.

"Do you mean to say you know where all that heap of gold went?" he said slowly. "Do you know where it is?"

"I'm in a fair way of knowing," Nick replied. "And I'm in a fair way of getting my hands on it. With your help," he added.

"With my help? What d'ye mean? What have you found out?"

"I'll let you know shortly. But in the meantime, listen to what I've got to tell you about the ship I spoke to you of just now."

He took from his pocket a folded letter and eyed it cunningly.

"This letter—" he tapped it with his finger—"is written to me, Nicholas Dench, from one of the great men of the country. A great and respectable man he is. His name is Skimchamp—Elias Skimchamp, Esquire." Dench's voice became almost reverent as he pronounced the name. "Maybe you've heard of him. And others there are besides him—names that you could bow to."

"Elias Skimchamp?" said Richards. "Aye, I've heard of him. A great and noble man they all say. He's written to you?"

"Him and no other. To me. And what's more, I've seen him and talked with him. Me—Nick Dench. What d'ye say to that? An old man, he is; completely bald without his wig—and a paunch like a bishop."

"Then I guess he's not the man who's fitting out this ship you're talking of."

"There you're wrong, my lad. Skimchamp is going to back you and me. Him and others besides him are backing us."

"Fitting out a pirate? You're mad."

"Who said a pirate? See here, Dick. This is no scurrying rat business; no sailing under queer colors. We're sailing in a respectable honest trader and private man-o'-war. What d'ye say to that?"

"An honest trader? You?" Richards laughed loudly. "How long will it be an honest trader with you aboard of her?"

For answer Dench handed him the letter.

"Read that, my lad," he said.

Richards unfolded it and read:

"From Elias Skimchamp, Esquire, to Mr. Nicholas Dench, Agent and Pilot of the West Indian Seas:

"Enclosed you will find a statement whereby you are authorized to acquire, within the limits of the accompanying schedule, those articles and stores necessary for the fitting out of the brigantine *Ten Commandments* as a private man-

of-war; the objects of the expedition being the establishment of lawful trade with the American Continent and the islands adjacent thereunto; the said trade to include such descents and engagements in force against his Majesty's enemies as the commander may deem prudent; for the prosecution of which the brigantine is provided with four large guns and six swivels, besides small arms in sufficient quantity.

"You are authorized to gather together a ship's company of likely fellows, the same being, if possible, God-fearing men and such as are in all other respects fit for your employment, and you are instructed to engage for their guidance a properly ordained clerk in holy orders, the same to be rated in equal rank with the master gunner, boatswain and carpenter, and to receive equal shares with those officers in such profits as may accrue.

"You are further instructed to neglect no opportunities for despoiling in all ways possible the aforesaid enemies of his Majesty the King, the owners being advised that much profit is to be secured thereby; but you are to observe and to exercise all possible gentleness and consideration that is comfortable with this object.

"You are also to observe the Sabbath in all respects that the business of the expedition will permit, and to secure that on all suitable occasions prayers are offered up for the safety and prosperity of the expedition, together with thanksgivings when undertakings are brought to a successful and profitable completion; whereby the favor of God in this and all things is to be secured."

RICHARDS handed back the letter.

"Where is this ship, the *Ten Commandments?*" he asked.

"She lies off Deptford. She's nearly ready for sea. I haven't been wasting my time these few weeks, Dick, while you've been in jail. A few more hands and we're off."

"You've got all the old gang?"

"A score of 'em. I'm shipping the crew. I stood out for that with Skimchamp. He's made Peacock cap'n, and a few of Peacock's men have gone aboard. I'm not taking any more except my own choice. I told Skimchamp we could get men more suitable for our purpose over the other side. So he ordered Peacock not to start operations till we filled up over there. We'll leave when I get a few extra hands of my own choice."

"You're standing by the articles as laid down by this Skimchamp?"

For answer Dench gave Richards a steady and prolonged wink. He poured himself another glass of brandy.

"That'll be as circumstances decides," he said. "Here's to a merry cruise and plenty of prizes."

"What were you going to tell me about Sennett's heap of gold?" demanded Richards after an interval.

"You never heard what became of Sennett after he took the *Santa Catarina?*" Dench asked.

"The devil alone knows that, I should say," replied Richards.

"And you don't know what became of his crew?"

"No one knows that either."

"Yes—there's one at least who knows besides Sennett himself."

"Do you know?"

"Now listen to me," said Dench. "No one, you say, knows what became of Sennett. No one knows what became of his crew. And no one knows what became of the *Santa Catarina* with half a million on board. But every one knows that he took the *Santa Catarina*. Every one knows that her hold was stuffed with doubloons. Well, how do they know, if there's no one alive to tell the tale?"

"But some *were* left to tell the tale," interrupted Richards. "After he took the galleon he scuttled the *Wasp*, at least so he thought, with half a dozen of his crew aboard. But they managed to plug her and work her to Grand Caicos. Three of 'em were caught and

hanged at Savannah. But three of 'em were never caught, and the world knows all about the *Santa Catarina* from them."

"That may be right enough; I'm not saying it isn't. But it's neither here nor there. The question is what became of Sennett and his haul?"

"Well?"

"Suppose now that Sennett had a kind of kink, what you may call a queer side to his character. Suppose this queer side was a sort of sneaking after religion. And suppose that one night not very long after he took the galleon, while he was anchored off a certain island that, we'll suppose, no one at present knows the situation of, he was full up of liquor, and this queer religious side of him got him right under. And suppose while he was in that state that he suddenly got into his head a notion that he himself and all his crew and the *Santa Catarina* was all wrong together.

"And suppose that he took the idea that he'd make everything right again with the help of a slow match and a dozen or so casks of gunpowder in the hold. And suppose that at the last half minute, just as he himself and all his crew and the *Santa Catarina* were on the point of going to hell together, he decided he'd leave the ship by himself in the galley and that he'd live a kind of better life.

"And suppose he did get ashore in the galley and all the rest of 'em went to hell just as he'd planned it all out, except maybe one of 'em that was ashore already that he didn't know of, or that he'd forgotten all about. Wouldn't that explain the disappearance of the *Santa Catarina* and Sennett and his crew?"

"It would if it's true. But what's the good of knowing all this? If the *Santa Catarina* was blown to hell with all her crew and half a million aboard, where's the good—"

"Ease up a bit. Who said the half million was aboard? Supposing Sennett had already planted it ashore with the help of a boat's crew a couple of days before he blew her up, eh? I'd say he was the only one that knew where it was planted, seeing that the boat's crew and all the rest of 'em, excepting only this sailor who broke his leave, were blown to hell."

Richards nodded.

"Well, then," Dench went on. "Supposing that all that money lying there, wherever it might be, begging to be gathered up, as you might say, caused a sort of unrest in Sennett's soul, and that he decided to go back some time and gather it up for himself. And supposing that he was struck down mortal sick, so as he couldn't rise from his bed again and so never got a chance to get that gold. And supposing that as he lay on his death bed, a Godfearing and law abiding subject of King George at a place not far from Charleston in South Carolina, he made a will all legal and proper leaving all he owned to a certain person, maybe a kind of relation of his, who he hadn't seen for these many years, and who maybe ain't so very far from this place at this moment. And suppose that will hands over Sennett's Haul to this same relation, eh?"

"Supposing all this is true—where do you and me come into it?"

"I'm coming to that. What I want to get into your head is that the haul is lying somewhere waiting to be gathered up, and that Sennett in his will leaves it all to this person I told you of."

RICHARDS pondered for a long minute.

"How did you come to know all this?"

"By keeping my eyes and my ears open. Now I've known for a very long time that a much respected subject of King George of the name of Matthew Saint, Esquire, living in the town of Charleston, South Carolina, was no other than Captain Matthew Sennett, the buccaneer. I've known it these four years or more. How did I know? From a little bird in the shape of a one-eared son of a marlinspike who sailed with him.

"And I knew Matt Saint himself, and a queer bird he was too, with his Bible and his rum bottle always at his elbow; but mighty nasty he could get when the liquor got him in irons. However, that's only part of the story. How did I hear of the end of the *Santa Catarina*, and how all her crew went to hell together bar Sennett and one other? Why, from just that same one-eared son of a gun that I told you of, who broke his leave ashore on that unholy night when all the rest went up. That's how I got to know what became of Sennett's Haul. And why didn't this bird, who we'll call Doorn, try to get the haul for himself? says you. And who said he didn't?

"Perhaps he went to Matt Saint and told him what he knew, hoping maybe that Saint would fit out an expedition and let him go half and half with what they found. And perhaps he hinted that it might be uncomfortable for Matt Saint if the citizens of Charleston came to know by any chance that he'd changed his name from Matt Sennett. I don't know, mind you, that he did put it that way to Saint. All I know is that I saw Doorn go into Saint's house one fine night some four years ago, and I never saw him come out again, and no one else ever saw him either."

"You know that Sennett planted this Doorn somewhere?"

"You may take your Bible oath on that."

"Then why didn't you go to Sennett, seeing that you got the weather gage of him? You might have forced him to let you in on the *Santa Catarina* gold."

"I might, as you say. And then again I might not. Sennett was never an easy snag to weather. Away from his Bible truck he feared nothing afloat or ashore. But that wasn't the only trouble. I might have made him swing for Doorn, says you. So I might; but where would I have figured in a law court? As chief witness against Saint—or Sennett? No, my lad. In the dock for piracy, maybe alongside of Sennett himself. In Charleston City I had to lay low, and you may take your Bible oath on that."

"And now Sennett's dying, you say?"

"Dead by now; dead as a scupper nail, you can bet on it."

"Did this man Doorn let you have the bearings of this island you spoke of?"

"I know the island."

"The devil you do!"

Dench smiled.

"You never heard of a place called the Flying Jib?" he said.

Richards shook his head.

"I never heard of it."

"No, I guess you haven't. Well, Dick, what would you say if I tell you I've been there—landed on that same island?"

"You landed on it?"

"Three years ago."

"You found nothing?"

"I never looked. 'Twas hopeless. Small the island is, but wooded all over. You might hunt for a lifetime. I saw at once it was hopeless to search without Sennett's plan."

"Where did you get to know about this will of Sennett's?"

"Aye, where did I get to know that? Now we're coming to the main part of the story as it concerns us.

"Saint, it seems, made a will before he died, all shipshape and proper, leaving all he possessed, and certain documents all sealed up, to a certain person of the name of David Waters who lives here in London Town. Have I seen them documents? Well, you may say I have. Seen 'em with these same deadlights of mine I have. And who showed 'em to me? Was it a lawyer named Hardmuth as I engaged to get my shipmate's neck away from Execution Dock? No, I won't go so far as to say he showed 'em to me.

"But what if a certain document was laying all aspruce and inviting-like in a flat basket on Lawyer Hardmuth's table? And what if I took a peep at this same document while Hardmuth was called away for a few minutes? And what if I found it told all about this

same will we've been talking about? That puts us on the right tack, I reckon. Eh? Don't it?"

"I don't see that it puts us anywhere," responded Richards. "I don't see where we come into it at all. We haven't got the will and we won't get it; and if we did get it, what good would it be to us?"

"What good? Why, damme, the will tells us where to lay our hands on Sennett's Haul."

"It tells us that, does it? Well, that makes a lot of difference, I'll allow. And this Lawyer Hardmuth has the will, you say?"

"No, he hasn't. The will is all sealed up in the care of another bird of a lawyer in Sennett's own town, Charleston. It's there we've got to go."

"You mean to take this ship there, the *Ten Commandments?*"

"We'll see that she goes there."

"And then we lay aboard of this lawyer and make him tip up the will?"

"Something like that, you may suppose."

"And what if this other fellow gets there first?"

"We'll have to see that he don't."

"D'ye know him? Have you seen him?"

"No—I can't say I have. But we'll smell him out right enough. A brace of fools we'll be else. One thing you can take your oath on. This David Waters never leaves England to go to America. Whatever else happens, that we'll see to, you and me."

Over their brandy the two plotters sat far into the night, discussing their plans with regard to Sennett's Haul and the ship called the *Ten Commandments.*

CHAPTER VII

DAVID WATERS GOES A-VOYAGING

IT WAS rather late in the afternoon when Waters made his way to the mercantile house of Harper and Foote, Virginia merchants and factors, for the purpose of arranging certain details in connection with his projected voyage to America. The House of Harper and Foote was situated in a turning off Leadenhall Street and not far from the Mansion House. He entered the large counting house, and having stated his business to a clerk whose desk was near the entrance, he was directed to take a seat and requested to wait for a short while.

A great stir of activity was going on within the large room, but the business was carried on with a quietness that appeared remarkable to a sailor accustomed to the noisy exchanges between wharfsides and ships' decks and holds. As his eyes wandered round the assembly of clerks, agents and customers, he caught sight of a young woman standing at a counter not far away. Her face was half turned toward a clerk, who appeared to be giving her some explanation or direction. There was something about her countenance, which Waters saw in profile, that at once arrested his attention.

It was not wholly the fact that she was good looking and pleasant of feature—though good looks she had without a doubt—but that her attitude at the counter and her air of listening conveyed an impression that there lay behind her countenance a mind of no ordinary force.

The clerk ceased his quiet discourse and she turned her head in Waters' direction. Her eyes went to the ceiling as though she pondered over what she had just heard. Then she turned once more to the clerk. She nodded to him and spoke with an animated air of decision. Then, gathering up some papers, she turned and walked with a brisk step to the entrance and passed outside.

At that moment the clerk approached Waters once more and beckoned him to follow. His eyes, as he spoke, however, were not on Waters but were turned toward the young woman who was making her departure.

"Will you step this way, sir?" he said.

And then, as Waters stood up to ac-

company him, he tapped his arm and pointed to the door through which the young woman had just passed.

"Did you notice who that was, sir?" he asked.

"That young woman? I saw her. What about her?"

"That was the witness at the Old Bailey trial just concluded, sir. She was the passenger in the *Delaware*."

"Indeed? Her name is— Let me see—"

"Josephine Brant."

"To be sure."

"You're right, sir. And a terrible time she had with the mutineers, I'm told. Not all of it came out at the trial, they say. Not a small part of it came out."

"What is she doing here?"

"Taking a passage back to America in the *Governor of the Indies*."

"O-ho," murmured Waters to himself. "Mistress Brant is to be my fellow passenger, then."

Judging by his countenance, the intelligence appeared to accord him a lively sense of satisfaction.

Having concluded his business with the house of Harper and Foote, Waters made his way westward for the purpose of effecting some purchases in a shop situated near Aldersgate.

A few days later Waters paid his final visit to Mr. Hardmuth in order to bid him farewell. He left the chambers of the attorney late in the evening, and it was very dark as he walked down Gray's Inn Lane toward Holbourne. He carried in his hand a small satchel which contained a number of documents concerning Matthew Saint's legacy and the establishment of his identity as heir.

He had not gone more than about thirty paces when he became aware that a man was stealing toward him from the opposite side of the lane. At the same time he heard footsteps moving quickly in his direction from behind.

Fearing an attack from footpads, he stopped with his back to the wall of Gray's Inn and awaited events. He had with him, besides the satchel, a thick oaken cudgel, which he usually carried with him when he went forth at night. The man who was crossing the road stopped at once, and Waters guessed that he was up to no good. The one who was approaching from behind also slowed up. And then he observed a third person steal from out of the gloom on the opposite side of the road.

Waters was satisfied that the three were in league to rob him and without more ado he launched himself at the one who was nearest him. He took him completely by surprise and, before the fellow could raise a hand to defend himself, Waters dealt him such a blow on the top of the head that he went down like a felled ox. The other two at once made for him.

For the next few minutes Waters was hard put to it to defend himself, for his attackers managed to get close in to him in the dark and he was unable to wield his stick to the best advantage. Nevertheless, he contrived to do some substantial damage to the face of one of his assailants by jabbing the end of the stick into the eyes, nose and mouth of the fellow.

But it was the other who gave him the most trouble. A strongly built man of his own stature, he seemed to be the leader of the trio. Waters heard him say to his confederates—

"You lay aboard of him with your stick while I turn about and get to windward of him."

A most furious assault was then directed at Waters; the one whose countenance he had mauled being in front, while the other went behind him. He ducked his head to avoid one vicious blow from the former and then he felt a sudden sharp twinge in his back near the base of his neck. The man behind had stabbed him. Fortunately the knife had been diverted by the shoulder blade, or else probably it would have been all over with him. Waters staggered and swung round as best he could to face the man in time to observe him raise his knife to strike once more. Weakened and

exhausted, he managed one more swing with his cudgel.

It fell, luckily, on the hand that held the knife. After that he had a confused recollection of lights approaching. The footpads made off, and he was in no condition to follow them. He found several persons standing about him, supporting him and offering their assistance. He gave them what information he could about his assailants. It was little enough, as it had been too dark to see their faces clearly. He thought they were seafaring men.

It was not long before he became very faint. He had lost a lot of blood and he could not walk without assistance. His rescuers helped him to the house of a surgeon nearby, and there Waters' wound was dressed and his shoulder bound up. The surgeon told him to lose no time in getting to bed. A conveyance was procured and in it he drove to his lodging.

For the next five days he lay in bed. Beside being too weak to move, he had much fever. He muttered a great deal about the *Governor of the Indies* and a lady passenger on board of her, and the idea which persisted in his mind that the ship must sail without him no doubt helped to make his condition worse than it would otherwise have been.

On the fourth day Hardmuth visited him and told him that the *Governor of the Indies* had left the river. Waters was very much disappointed at hearing this, but the lawyer was able to cheer him somewhat by telling him that the ship would remain at anchor for a few days off Deal. If he were strong enough in two or three days, the lawyer said he might, by taking the coach to Deal, join the ship at that place.

A COUPLE of days after Hardmuth's visit Waters managed, though still very weak, to leave his bed and, having secured through the agency of a serving man a seat on the Deal coach, he left London very early in the morning for the seaside town. He carried with him the satchel containing his papers and a few other belongings; his chest had already been conveyed to the ship on the day before he was assaulted. The coach encountered much mist on the journey, and its progress at times was much affected. Particularly dense was the fog in the neighborhood of Sittingbourne, at which town a stop was made for refreshments.

It was late in the afternoon when the coach arrived at Deal. Waters lost no time in going to the beach. In the fading light he could see several ships in the Downs, and the largest of them—a large full rigged ship which was anchored about three-quarters of a mile from the shore—he was able to identify as the *Governor of the Indies*. It was a notable relief to him to know that she had not yet sailed, and he at once engaged a waterman to take him out to her.

The darkness had completely fallen by the time he was fairly on the water, but he and the boatman had carefully noted the situation of the ship, and they headed for the lights which she displayed. They had not traversed more than half the way when Waters noticed to his alarm and chagrin that a mist was gradually drifting down on the roadstead from the north. He observed one or two lights fade out, and then a few wisps of vapor passed over them. Soon afterward they were wholly enveloped, and nothing whatever could they see but the boat in which they were sitting.

For awhile the man continued to row, although slowly. But Waters soon told him to cease, since there was a likelihood in that gloom of their getting still farther away from the ship.

"Try a hail," said Waters.

The man let go the oars and, rising to his feet, cupped his hands.

"Ship a-hye!" he bellowed in a husky but powerful voice.

About ten seconds later there came to their ears a faint answering hail.

"Hye!"

"That'll be her," said the man. "Over

there, I reckon."

He pointed ahead.

He turned the boat's head a bit and pulled vigorously with his oars. For a time he rowed on without result and Waters began to fear that he had missed the quarry altogether. He was on the point of telling him to hail once more when, without any sort of warning, he heard the blade of one of the oars grate against some hard and resisting object at the water level. Simultaneously a black and shapeless bulk reared itself up in front of them.

"Here she be," said the boatman. "And that's the anchor cable I struck. We've hit her right in the bows."

Waters saw in the gloom the thick and heavy cable stretched taut above him, and ahead of it the dark mass became on closer inspection the stem and bows of a ship.

The boatman cupped his hands and sent up another shout:

"Ship a-hye! Coming aboard."

"Aye-aye," came from up above.

He rowed the boat alongside, and a rope ladder was lowered. With some difficulty Waters contrived to get upon it and work his way painfully upward. When he was near the top a hand grasped his shoulder, and then an arm went round his back. With this help he was able to mount on deck, although he was much exhausted by the time he arrived there. A moment or two later his bag was hauled up and dumped on the deck beside him.

Of much that followed he had only a hazy recollection. He saw a man of rather less than middling height, holding a lantern above his shoulder while he scanned his face. Waters was able to perceive that he was a man of great girth and strength, and the lantern he held lighted up a bare forearm of great thickness, heavily tattooed. He had lowering eyebrows that gave him a scowling expression, and on his broad face was a dreadful scar that extended lividly from the top of his forehead to the lower jaw.

Waters wondered whether he were an officer of the ship. He thought otherwise; his appearance was so uncouth. He said not a word, but continued to hold aloft the lantern while he gazed at Waters.

It was another who spoke.

"Seemingly you've come to some hurt."

Waters turned and beheld a taller figure beside the man with the lantern. He had seen his face before somewhere. He had rather a sharp nose and a notable squint. Where had he seen him? Then in a flash he recognized him as the man he had seen emerging from the door of Lawyer Hardmuth's chambers on the occasion when he paid his visit to arrange for his departure. He it was who had looked at Waters so strangely, as though he had some peculiar knowledge in regard to him. Waters wondered what he could be doing in this ship.

"Where are the others?" asked the man.

Waters looked at him stupidly. He knew of no others who were due to join the ship.

"Badly hurt, all of 'em?" persisted the questioner. "Or dead?"

Waters shook his head, though what he meant to imply he did not know. He was feeling more than a little dizzy and faint.

"Well, you've brought the bag all right," said the man, stooping toward the satchel.

"Aye, I've got the bag," Waters murmured.

"Here man, hold up," said the fellow with the lantern suddenly.

The man grasped him by the arm. Waters became aware that he was tottering. He felt something warm trickling down his left wrist. It was blood. His wound had reopened. During his climb on board he must have struck some hard projection to his disadvantage. The lantern swayed. The figures of the men on deck became blurred and indistinct. Waters remembered nothing more.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GOVERNOR OF THE INDIES SAILS

THE weather was cold and bright over the Downs as the *Governor of the Indies* weighed anchor to proceed on her voyage.

On the ship's forecastle some dozen or fifteen men sweated as they thrust at the capstan bars to the music of a hautboy and a fiddle, played respectively by the purser's steward and one of the carpenter's mates, and the rattling accompaniment of the capstan pawls. The thick and heavy anchor cable crawled upward from the seat to the hawse hole, dropping off small chunks of the sea bed as it passed slowly inside to its resting place in the cable locker. Soon the huge anchor broke the surface of the water and ascended, likewise dripping and mud caked to the bow.

On the poop stood Josephine Brant, leaning over the rail and watching the sailors as they set the great topsails and courses. Just beside her a cabin steward laid over the rail a large cloak and hood. She spoke to him a word of thanks, and then as he was about to move away she addressed him again.

"You have heard nothing of the passenger who was to have joined the ship here? Mr. Waters, I think his name is."

"No, ma'am," he replied. "We have made all possible inquiries ashore, but no one has heard of him. The captain won't wait longer."

She nodded and he went down the ladder.

By the time the anchor was properly stowed the ship was well under way and thrusting through the short billows on her passage downchannel. As soon as the work of making sail was finished Josephine saw three sailors walk aft to the quarterdeck and stand there together in a row. They were joined almost immediately by the first mate, who stood in front of them and appeared to question each one in turn. The girl watched them with the faint interest which the average voyager accords to any activity or event at sea that appears in the least degree out of the ordinary.

There was nothing very unusual about the appearance of these men except, perhaps, that one of them was strikingly well formed and muscular. It was this man who arrested the eye of Josephine, but she had not been looking at him for long before her expression of languid interest changed suddenly to one of marked concern. She gave a palpable start and clutched the rail in front of her. At that moment she heard a light footfall and became conscious of the presence of some one at her elbow. She turned round and saw the captain standing beside her. He nodded amiably to her. Abruptly she spoke a question.

"Who is that man down there, Captain Tanner? The middle one of the three."

There was a note of anxiety in her voice and her finger shook a little as she pointed.

"Eh?" said the captain. "His name? Let me see. I'll find out for you. Do you know him, Miss Brant?"

"I've seen him before," she replied. "He wasn't in the ship when we left London?"

"No. We've just shipped him. All the three of 'em. We were a bit shorthanded, and as they were sailors and offered themselves, we took 'em."

As he finished speaking, the mate on the deck below dismissed the men forward. The captain at once hailed him.

"Mr. Jackson, step up here, will you?"

"What's the name of that new man?" the captain asked as soon as the mate stepped on the poop. "The biggest one of the three, I mean."

"Smith, sir," the mate replied at once. "John Smith, he gave."

"John Smith, eh? Is that the name you knew him by, Miss Brant?"

"No. I don't think— I think I must have been mistaken," she replied. She regretted at once the impulse that caused her to make inquiries to the captain about the man. "I was mistaken,"

she repeated. "He is like some one I met. But he is not the one. Only something like him."

But she was not mistaken in the man she had seen. In the newly joined sailor she had recognized Richards, the man who had been her fellow passenger in the *Delaware*.

The fresh breeze continued with little variation for two whole days, during which the *Governor of the Indies* made good progress on her voyage. Then the wind veered to the northwest and continued equally strong. After a day or so it freshened almost to gale force, with occasional heavy squalls. Very large seas were constantly encountered. By this time the ship had gone well beyond the English Channel. On the sixth day out the wind fell light and a large and rather confused swell caused her to labor considerably.

DURING this time there occurred a rather serious accident due to the excessive rolling of the ship. A large water cask, that had been temporarily made fast to the main bitts, broke away from its fastenings and rolled against the lee bulwark, which it struck with great force. Josephine Brant was standing at the time close by the weather shrouds and gazing over the gray waste of heaving waters, while she held on to a stay to steady herself against the violent motion of the deck.

She heard the noise of the impact and turned her head round to determine the cause. A tremendous roll of the ship followed, and the heavy cask at once turned in the opposite direction and rolled unevenly but swiftly across the inclined deck toward the weather bulwark at the exact spot where she stood. Before she realized her danger the heavy mass was nearly on top of her. Through her own volition she could not have escaped being crushed against the bulwark.

But at that moment, while her terrified gaze was fastened on the rapidly approaching cask, she felt a violent shove from the direction to the left of her. A forceful hand had grasped her elbow and she found herself propelled swiftly for two or three yards forward along the deck. The cask hit the bulwark with tremendous force and was immediately stove in. Another instant or two of delay, and she would have been crushed almost certainly to death.

The hand which had thrust her out of danger now held her from falling. She looked round and saw beside her the athletic figure of Richards. After placing her on her feet, he released her. At that moment the second mate stepped hastily up to her.

"You're not hurt, Miss Brant?" he asked.

"Thank you—I'm all right," she replied. "No, I— No, I'm not hurt at all. I think I'll go to my cabin."

The mate extended his arm to help her, but she hastily declined his assistance.

"I am all right," she repeated. "Thank you—"

She turned and hastened aft to the door of the main cabin.

About four or five minutes after arriving in her cabin Josephine received a visit from the cabin steward, who conveyed to her a message from Captain Tanner deploring the mishap and inquiring after her welfare. She sent him back with the reply that she was quite well, but preferred to rest awhile. She was indeed rather more shaken up than she cared to confess. The suddenness of the mishap and the narrowness of her escape had bestowed on her a shock, the effect of which could not pass away for some little time. It was some time indeed before she recollected that she not only owed her life to one whom she feared more than any one else in the world, but that she had omitted to thank him for the great service he had rendered her. She would have to thank him.

It was after tea time on the following day that she encountered Richards. He

was taking a trick at the wheel for the first dog watch. She had to summon all her resolution to go up to him. He saw her as she approached, and when she stood beside him he nodded his head slightly.

"I did not thank you for what you did yesterday," she said.

He did not look at her. His eyes were on the sails.

"No need for thanks," he replied after a short pause.

"But I have to thank you. You saved my life."

"You don't *have* to thank me," he said.

For a minute or two she gazed over the weather bulwark at the windy twilight beyond. There did not seem to be anything more to say. Yet she felt she owed him a more adequate expression of her gratitude. He for his part spoke not a word more, but appeared to concentrate the whole of his attention on his work of steering the ship. At last she said—

"You decided to return to the sea?"

"Yes."

"Why did you come to this ship?"

"I wanted to go to America. I found out that this ship was going there, so I joined her. You see I'm an honest mariner, now," he added.

"An honest mariner—" She repeated the words mechanically.

"No more an outlawed sea rat."

He looked at her for a moment with a slight smile on his face, and then glanced at the main topsail and turned the wheel a spoke or two.

"Just a plain, honest Englishman for once," he added.

"For once! Not for always?"

"Who knows? Maybe my luck will turn, and then maybe I'll turn with it."

"Pray, why not turn in any case?" she said with an impulse she could not fathom.

"Little luck has come my way up to now," he replied.

"You've had a bad life?"

"Oh, I've been bad enough. Not but what I've mixed with worse."

"I didn't mean that. I meant a hard life. No, not that either exactly. A life of continued ill fortune. That is what I mean."

"I've had little else in my lifetime. When I was no more than four years old I was stolen by Indians."

"Yes?"

She had lost her fear of him for the time being. She found herself becoming more than a little interested.

"You lived with the Indians?" she asked.

"For a number of years; until I was about seven."

"And then?"

"The soldiers got me. They had a brush with the redskins and wiped out their encampment. They made a sort of pet of me until I grew a bit bigger. Then they made me a drummer. I got more kicks than ha'pence at that trade. I liked it less and less, and at last I ran away."

"When did you go to sea?"

"At once. I became a cabin boy in a slaver. That turned out to be worse than soldiering. I was starved as well as kicked. But before the end of the cruise the ship turned pirate, and then it became easier for me. I've been that kind more or less ever since."

"It's a mean life, I should guess; apart from the wickedness of it," she said, with a feeling of pity.

"You may say that too."

"You won't live that life any more?"

He shrugged his shoulders; she appealed to him again—

"And where does it land you? Those men, Mellor, Cato—"

"I'm not afraid of finding myself again in the dock," he interrupted roughly. "I was never afraid of taking chances. I'm not afraid now."

"Maybe not," Josephine replied quietly. "But all the same, where does it get you? Where is the joy of it?"

"I daresay you're right. There never was much joy to it."

"Then why continue it?"

HE WAS silent for a considerable time, all the while gazing at the sails ahead of him. Then he took his eyes off them and turned his face toward her.

"All the King's men couldn't turn me from the trade if I didn't want to be turned," he said. "But there's just one person in the world who might."

There was challenge in his tone. Purposely she ignored it. She told herself at once that such a person, whoever it might be, interested her not at all. Abruptly she decided to end the conversation.

"Well, you have had dire warning," she said. "Whatever ill that may come to you from such a course henceforth will be on your own head."

She left him and went on to the poop.

Josephine was both irritated and alarmed at the extent to which the man Richards occupied her thoughts during the next couple of days. She thought of him with a vague disquiet.

Despite his economy of words, the man had a dominating personality. And she feared that, if she held further communication with him, he might exercise an undue influence over her. With this thought she pulled herself up sharply. Her father's murder was the result of his vile scheming. Once again her horror of the man rose to her consciousness. The recollection of her father's murder was a final and complete antidote to the tendency of her thoughts. Henceforth he ceased to occupy a place in them.

On the following evening, just after the conclusion of the last dog watch, he encountered her as she was leaving the saloon. He had just left the wheel and was loitering on that part of the upper deck in the expectation of seeing her. As soon as she appeared he walked boldly up to her.

"Miss Brant—" he said.

In her surprise at his boldness she hesitated a second or two before she replied. Then, as he was about to speak again, she raised her hand.

"Don't say any more, I beg of you," she said. "I owe you my life, and I'm grateful for that. But, please, I can not hold any further conversation with you. You will respect my wish, I trust, and seek not to continue our acquaintance, which must cease now."

She turned away resolutely and climbed the ladder on to the poop. He stood for a time gazing after her; and when she had disappeared he walked slowly forward, his head down and his hands behind his back.

CHAPTER IX

THE *TEN COMMANDMENTS*

WHEN Waters came once more to his proper senses he found himself lying in a bunk in a very small cabin. For some little time before his final awakening he had a hazy sense that some persons were moving about him. Once a glass containing some unpalatable fluid was held to his lips. Looking over the glass, he thought he saw the face of the man with the squint—he who had spoken to him when he came on board.

They told him afterward that he had lain there for six days. That time was not passed wholly in a state of peaceful unconsciousness. He passed through many periods of feverish dreaming or delirium. In these dreams he saw Lawyer Hardmuth and the person with the squint. He saw the seaman with the scar on his countenance. He saw Josephine Brant and Agua Richards, the fellow who was said to be the exact physical counterpart of himself.

Gradually the intensity of his dreams faded. He slumbered placidly for a space. Then reason slowly came back to him. Gradually the uncertain outline of the objects around him became a more solid reality.

He soon discovered through the sounds he heard and also by a sensation of irregular movement, that he was in a ship and that the ship was under way. A continual see-saw movement of his

berth, an occasional deep plunge, now and again a forward thrust followed by a sharp arrest, told him that he was moving through a fairly troubled sea. He heard the swash of moving water not far from him, and at irregular intervals a sharp thud as the bows of the ship encountered a wave larger than usual.

Thus he remained for some time, trying to solve the riddle of his whereabouts and pondering over his condition. Then the cabin door opened and a man came in. It was the squinting fellow. Waters was not a little surprised to see him, but the first words he heard him utter astonished him beyond measure. More than that, they at once put him thoroughly on his guard against the man who was addressing him.

"You'll do all right now, Agua," he said.

Agua! The pirate whom Waters resembled in countenance and stature! This man with the squint was a friend of his, he remembered. He had fallen among very doubtful company. He reflected that he would have to be careful what he said.

"I am much better," he replied.

"You'll be taking your watch in three or four days."

Taking his watch! What ship was this, then? Waters made no reply, and the other man continued:

"We're well clear of the Channel now. It'll soon be time to get to business. But we're damned shorthanded—not fifty all told; and some of 'em are soft. Though we've enough of our trade aboard to do what we want. But you don't say nothing just now, understand." He laid his finger along the side of his nose. "What did you do with Bale and Hoker?"

"I lost 'em," Waters replied, not knowing what else to say, and disinclined in any case to say much until he knew where he was. "I couldn't wait," he added.

"Well, they won't matter much; though we could do with 'em. We're shorthanded of the right sort, as I've told you. You grabbed his satchel, all right; that's the chief thing. And a mighty fine prize it is, as I don't doubt you know already. You took soundings of the contents, eh?"

"You may say that," Waters responded vaguely.

"Just so. Now those papers give us clear sailing directions. As soon as we've settled with Peacock I guess you and me'll set a course for Charleston right away. You'll be David Waters. You present yourself with the documents all shipshape and proper to this lawyer fellow, Garner. He hands us over Sennett's instructions, with all sailing directions complete. All we have to do then is to go where he tells us and scoop it out clean."

The fellow tapped Waters on the shoulder and smiled. Shortly afterward he went out of the cabin and Waters was left to ponder over what he had heard.

"So that's the scheme!" he murmured to himself. "And a pretty scheme it is to be sure; and a pretty scoundrel I seem to have fallen alongside of."

DURING the next few days while he lay in his berth he contrived, by keeping his eyes and ears open, to learn some important facts about the ship and its company. He learned that the ship was the *Ten Commandments*, and that she was fitted out for use as a private man-of-war against the Spaniards, who were enemies of Great Britain at that time. He found out that the name of the man with the squint was Nicholas Dench, and that he had been commissioned as first lieutenant.

From what Dench told him, Waters gathered that the crew was composed mainly of rogues and cutthroats. Once while he lay sick he had a visit from the captain of the ship. Edmund Peacock, he found, was a surly person with very little to say. From what Waters heard, however, it seemed that he was one of the few honest men in the ship. He also

found out that the man Agua Richards had been appointed to act as second lieutenant and mate.

After four days Waters was able to go on deck. In the character of Agua Richards he began to take his watches there and then, gaining as quickly as he could a proper acquaintance with the ship and her complement, this being necessary for his safety and the correct discharge of the part he was resolved to play.

The boatswain, whose name was Izak Willetts, was the person whom Waters had met first of all when he stepped on board the ship at Deal. He was the worst looking ruffian of them all. He was a pirate, if ever there was one; he proclaimed himself a cutthroat, and he looked it every inch. He was a strongly built fellow, though rather short, and on one occasion Waters saw him take two men in his hands and knock their heads together with seeming ease.

Waters was not a little amazed to find that this unpromising and villainous looking crew counted among them a chaplain. The Reverend Isaiah Gilman was a small man with a thin face and a protruding jaw. His eyes were a dull gray and entirely devoid of expression. When Waters saw him for the first time, he was playing cards with three members of the crew, and the stakes were the day's allowance of rum. Gilman won every time. His deftness with cards was amazing.

What his special functions in the ship were, Waters could not determine. Gilman owned a Bible, and sometimes during the dog watches when he was half tipsy he would produce it and read from it a few verses in a sonorous voice. It was all very preposterous, but it was a fashion that none thought of questioning.

For Captain Peacock, Waters had no very great regard. He was a good seaman and navigator, but his hold over the ruffians he commanded was very loose. They frequently gave him black looks and even on occasions murmured openly at his commands. To their glances he affected an indifference; to their murmurs he replied with a brief but loud reiteration of his orders followed by a string of meaningless oaths.

Before very long Waters began to fear for the captain's safety not less than for his own. It was clear that the captain's interests and those of his ruffianly crew ran not together. Waters was able to learn that much from the remarks he heard from the crew. Also Nicholas Dench spoke to him on several occasions and, although he understood not the whole import of what he heard, he gathered that a plot was afoot to depose the captain from his command. What lay beyond this purpose he did not yet know; but that most of the crew had some villainous undertaking in view he felt fairly certain.

FOR about a fortnight after Waters rose from his couch for the first time, no ships of any sort were sighted. And then one early morning they passed and spoke a large Portuguese pink bound from the Brazils to Lisbon. In the evening of that same day they sighted, though far off, another ship, but her nationality they could not determine. The next day they sighted yet a third, and passed close to her and spoke her. She was an Englishman this time, and appeared to be well laden. She also was homeward bound from America.

The appearance of these ships caused no little excitement among the crew. On all occasions they gathered in clusters at the rail and gazed intently at the ships as they passed. Nor did the excitement wholly die away when they passed out of sight. For days afterward the men talked of them. The crew seemed to be able to talk of nothing else. By this time the ship had gone far on its voyage, and the weather was much warmer, for a more southerly latitude had been reached.

One early evening while Waters was keeping watch he saw about half a dozen

of the crew gathered in the waist of the ship. They appeared to be arguing furiously. Some of them were shaking their fists at the others, and their voices grew louder and louder. Then one of them, an excitable fellow from the west country, named Owen, began to bawl at the top of his voice.

"Ye poor mangy dogs," he bellowed. "Have ye got the guts to follow me aft? I'll show ye. What did ye ship aboard this craft for? Was it to make a quick passage to Americy and back again, so as ye could tell 'em all by Thames side as you'd been over there? Well, I'll tell ye what I shipped for. And it wasn't to help to make money for a lot of fat bellied landsmen as have got too much already. I jined up to fill me own pockets, and to fill 'em out of any ship as hove in sight. *Any* ship, d'ye hear?"

"Ye got no call to talk that way, Ned Owen," responded another. "We'll make the gold maybe when we arrives on t'other side. Don't ye be bawling too soon, Ned. This here ship has her sailing directions, and them directions is to make for the Spanish settlements where ships in plenty is to be picked up; ships as we can handle in regular fashion, England being at war with 'em. Don't ye be hallooing for us to turn pirate, my lad. It won't get us nowhere, and there's some of us here as won't stand for it. So ye can belay that talk, I'm telling ye."

"Belay yourself, Bill Barnett," shouted Owen in a passion. "What's this you're giving us? We'll take gold—"

At this moment the boatswain Willetts appeared in their midst.

"What's this I hear?" said he. "Grumbling again, Owen? Now, you listen to me. When the people aft wants your views about the workings of the cruise no doubt they'll ask you for 'em. Until then you'll pipe down and obey orders, my lad. Get that into your thick skull as quick as you can."

"That's all very well, Izak, a-coming from ye. But ye wasn't talking so contented like on t'other night. If I remember aright ye was all for a free cruise—"

"That'll do from you, Ned Owen," interrupted the boatswain angrily. "You pipe down and obey orders; that's all you've got to do. And I don't want no more back talk from you, my lad."

About a week afterward there occurred an event that showed in a much stronger light the temper of the ship's company. It was just after dinner and Waters had retired to his cabin, that being his watch below, when he heard the thin sound of the boatswain's pipe followed by a hoarse and cracked voice bawling—

"Hands lay aft on the quarterdeck."

Immediately afterward he heard the patter of feet on the upper deck, while a confused murmur indicated that a number of men had foregathered there. Believing that an announcement of importance was about to be made to the crew, he left his cabin to go on deck. When he reached the foot of the ladder Captain Peacock brushed past and began to ascend before him. On perceiving Waters, however, he turned his head.

"Who gave orders to muster the hands?" he asked angrily.

Waters replied that he did not know. The captain hurried up the ladder and Waters followed him at once. When they reached the deck they found the whole of the crew assembled. The captain at once demanded by whose orders they were mustered. Thereupon the boatswain, Izak Willetts, stepped forward and told the captain that the hands demanded a conference with the commander and master mariner.

FROM the attitude of the boatswain and that of the men behind him it was clear that the crew were in a dangerous frame of mind. Captain Peacock replied to the boatswain by calling him a mutinous scoundrel and threatening to place him in irons, an address that at once brought forth angry murmurs from the crew.

"I knows nought about that," replied the boatswain in an unperturbed manner. "I mustered the hands aft, Captain Peacock, because these same hands demands to talk to you. And seeing as how the hands have elected me as their spokesman, maybe you'll listen to what I has to say and give me a straight answer."

The captain was not a little taken aback by this insolent address. He bit his lip and did not reply at once. He glanced at the men and noted their truculent attitude. Then, with a very red face, he told the boatswain to speak out, which he did.

"Being duly elected as spokesman for the ship's company, as I said before, and speaking to you in their name, I asks you, Captain Peacock, and I wants a straight answer, seeing as we wants to know *your* object in this here cruise, ours being the taking of such ships as good fortune sends, and no close regard for what they be or where they sails from, all being fair game. We now demands of you that, allowing that none of 'em be too big and doughty for our stomachs, as being provided with teeth above our match, you alters course when sighting ships and lays aboard of 'em with no delay. Them's our wishes, Captain."

Captain Peacock was manifestly very angry at the demands of this fellow, who claimed to speak for the whole ship's company. He mastered his anger, however, and after a little reflection spoke to the men fairly and with a sort of dignified courage.

"My lads," said he, "if so be that what I've heard from the bosun does truly represent your wishes, I'll make you my reply. You ask me to lay alongside of any ship that comes within our range without regard to what flag she sails under. If I take your meaning aright, you want me to turn this ship into a pirate. That's contrary to the articles you shipped under. You know as well as I do that you and I and all of us are responsible to the owners, and as such we're sailing under the protection of the King's ships. The orders of the owners was to proceed to the Indies with all dispatch and there to ship extra hands and stores to render us fit to engage armed ships of enemy flag, if so be as we encounters 'em.

"I'm not saying what I'd like to do as against what you'd like to do; I'm telling you what my orders are. And I'm telling you that what you propose to do is against the law and will only put you on a lee shore with the hangman to windward of you. As for attacking them ships as we passed in the last ten days, I tell you it couldn't be done. Apart from the delay for which, as I've told you, my orders don't provide, all them ships were sailing under a friendly flag, and as such were free to proceed with no hurt from us, such being according to our articles and according to the law."

A good many of the hands seemed to be impressed by this speech, but not so with the boatswain; and the ruffian had with him at least a round dozen of the crew. He stepped a pace forward and thrust forward his jaw.

"You talks of the law, Captain Peacock, and you talks of the hangman. If you hopes to scare these mariners, my shipmates, well, I'm letting you know you're off your course by sixteen points, no less. For we're none of us held by the one nor afeard o' the other. And what's more they ain't got us yet neither of 'em, nor likely to. And it's a long vyage to Execution Dock, anyway; what d'ye say, shipmates?"

He turned to the crowd behind him. A chorus of ayes answered him; but there was still a good number who chose to say nothing. The captain was quick enough to observe the undecided attitude of these men.

"Look you here, my lads," he shouted. "I'm not talking to them as want to be outlawed, nor them as care nought where they land their shipmates, be it Execution Dock or the Spanish or Portuguese mines. I'm speaking to them as want to

go home to England with their pockets full of Spanish doubloons got in lawful enterprise; them as can step ashore in Wapping or Southampton or Bristol with no fear of the law or the King's men being laid agin 'em. Spanish gold in plenty you'll get, if you do your duty and obey orders, and I'm going to show you where to get it. Now get for'ard, all of you, and at three bells I pipe a ration of rum."

The captain waved his arm in the direction of the bows of the ship, and the crew, all but a few of the worst malcontents, turned round and slowly dispersed. Some of them talked together and seemed to be much influenced by the captain's speech. A few seemed disposed to linger, but, finding themselves deserted by the majority, they had also perforce to take themselves off, including even the boatswain, Willetts. He threw a sullen glance in the captain's direction as he went.

While the captain was addressing the ship's company, Waters watched Nicholas Dench narrowly. Dench had stood all the while about four or five paces from the captain's elbow. He did not speak a word and Waters was unable to determine whether he wished to support the captain or the men. Waters fancied the latter, but could not be sure. Dench's face did not disclose what was in his mind. Once while the captain was talking Willetts glanced in his direction and Dench nodded his head slightly. Waters felt sure that some signal had passed between them, but he could not tell what it was.

IF Captain Peacock thought that his speech and his dismissal of the hands had brought tranquillity and contentment among them, he was sadly mistaken. Far from being tranquil, they appeared more unsettled than before. Often when Waters went among them he interrupted a discussion on this subject of piracy. They seemed bent on forcing the captain in that direction. Sometimes they broke off their conversation as Waters approached, as though they did not wish him to hear what they were saying. But more than once they openly spoke of the subject to him and asked his views on it.

That placed him in a quandary, but he was emboldened enough to try to dissuade them, and he attempted to place before them the dangers they would run. He was sure that there were instigators constantly at work among them, the chief of them being the boatswain. Waters had found out also that Willetts had taken a strong dislike to him. He fancied also that the boatswain suspected him.

Convinced that trouble was impending, Waters tried to warn Captain Peacock, but without effect. The captain derided his fears and expressed himself quite capable of dealing with the malcontents among the crew. He was determined, he said, to abide by the instructions of the owners. He would like to see the man who could compel him to do otherwise. He affected a foolish confidence and would take none of the precautions that Waters suggested for his own security and that of the property which the owners had entrusted to his care.

When Waters pressed his views upon him he bade him in a surly tone to attend to his own affairs since he, Captain Peacock, was quite competent to attend to his. Waters left him with a poor opinion of his common sense, but a strong conviction of his honesty.

It then occurred to him to sound the chaplain with a view to securing his services to dissuade the men from their purpose. Taking advantage of an occasion when Gilman was not wholly drunk, he took him aside and told him what he knew of the state of the crew and their inclination toward piracy. He asked him if he could not use whatever influence he possessed among them—he suspected it was not much—to turn them from their purpose. The Reverend Isaiah gave him a bland look and

then fastened his colorless eyes on the skyline beyond Waters' shoulder.

"My good sir," he said, "worthy folk like you and me are ill situated among these Amalakites. For myself, I've labored among 'em to no purpose, I fear. My heart is broken. You ask me to exhort 'em to abide by their duty and preserve a lawful obedience to their articles. Have I not done so? Have I not labored to improve their sinful souls? Have I not prayed for 'em? But they are sad creatures, unworthy of the ministrations of a man of God. I am saddened. There is nought left for me but to weep."

He suited the action to his speech, and tears came into his eyes. Waters had to give him up as a bad job.

Day by day Waters was becoming more and more dismayed at the growing spirit of revolt displayed by the crew. Nevertheless, he was convinced that by firm and prudent measures these ruffians might be brought even yet to obedience and discipline. But Edmund Peacock was a poor captain, though a tolerably good sailor, and it appeared only too likely that ere long his foolish obstinacy and blind disregard of facts would cost him his life. For several days Waters expected every hour to bring the tragedy that he felt sure must come to pass sooner or later.

And then one morning the thing that he feared did in truth happen. Captain Peacock disappeared and was never seen again. By what manner he met his end, Waters could only surmise. Probably a knife was stuck into him as he lay asleep in his berth. Waters was never told. And, moreover, few in the ship seemed to know, either. The story that was generally current was that he fell overboard from the poop during the morning watch. It was an unlikely story, since the captain never appeared on deck until the forenoon watch had begun. Except in case of bad weather or accident, of which there had been neither up to this time, there was no special reason why he should do so.

That he was murdered, Waters had no doubt. Also he felt sure that Nicholas Dench was privy to the crime, if indeed he did not himself commit it. No one but Dench and a fellow named O'Dell, who acted as steward, was allowed in the captain's cabin until the afternoon, when Dench invited Waters into it. He then told him briefly that the hands had elected him captain during the morning watch as soon as they were satisfied that Peacock was no longer in the ship. Waters did not venture to make any demur; it would have been extremely foolish to have done so. Dench had nearly the whole of the crew at his back, and his word was now law.

AT eight bells Dench caused the hands to be mustered. He told them in a few sentences that Captain Peacock had fallen overboard and they would now regard him—Nicholas Dench—as captain. No one asked any questions nor were any comments made. The whole crew appeared to accept the change with a good will.

Dench then addressed them as follows:

"My lads," said he, "I've heard ye say more than once that ye're dissatisfied with the cruise and the objects thereof. Ye've seen ships pass us by as ye considered we ought to have taken with small loss to ourselves. Now I have to say that if so be as ye're all still of the same mind, I propose to stop any ships as heaves in sight, supposing that they're not beyond our strength, and that we'll lay aboard of 'em and take from 'em all that we think is worth the taking. That's what I propose to do, and I take it that if any man among ye disagrees he'll say so here and now. What d'ye say?"

A chorus of assent went up from the crew. If there were any men among them that held contrary views they must have been very few indeed, and anyhow they did not venture to make known their dissent.

"There's one thing more I have to say," continued Dench. "Ye may think

that now as we're sailing under free ensign ye don't have to mind orders so much, or that ye take heed only of them as suits your inclination. I have then to remind ye that we're embarking on a more dangerous course than heretofore, and therefore it becomes us to keep a wary eye open and to preserve a discipline such as will aid us on a course profitable to ourselves, always bearing in mind as the King's ships and the King's men are henceforth agin us. Supposing which, I take leave to tell ye that I expect every man to obey all orders as are delivered by me and my officers and no delay in executing 'em. And if so be as there's a man among ye as don't propose to do what I say, let him stand forth and say so."

No one made any reply, and Dench took the men's silence as assent.

"Then I take it ye're all agreed," he said. "And now I've nothing more to say to ye except that an extra allowance of spirit will be piped at four bells."

Shortly afterward Dench summoned Waters to a conference with him in the main cabin. Willetts, who was now raised to the rank of second mate, was also invited to attend.

"We're committed now to the hilt," said Dench as they sat down. "There's no going back."

"True we're committed," responded Willetts. "And why shouldn't we be? Who's agin it among the ship's company? Three or four—maybe seven or eight. Call it seven or eight out of nearly fifty. What do they signify? And they'll come round too in time. Show 'em a few gold pieces and they'll want more. And if they don't come round, what do they signify again? We'll do without 'em, won't we?"

"I'll say we will," replied Dench, and he smiled at Waters.

"We'll do without 'em," repeated Willetts. "And so much the worse for them. As for the rest of us, we'll hoist the Jolly Roger and be damned to the owners. We'll have a merry cruise, and all's fair game as comes our way."

So far, Waters had not spoken. He did not know what to say. He perceived that Dench was looking at him all the time with narrowed eyelids.

"What say ye, Agua?" said Dench.

Waters did not reply. He sat and gazed at the table before him. There was a lengthy silence.

"I can see ye don't approve," said Dench at last.

Waters took a deep breath and looked him straight in the eyes.

"I don't," he said boldly. And then he added, "You think, both of you, that you're on a straight course with a fair wind at the back of you. But I can tell you that you won't fetch up where you fancy. No good to yourselves'll come of it."

He began to grow heated and his voice grew louder.

"You've thrown your articles overboard," he said. "You're going to take any ship that heaves in sight. Very well, then. What are you going to do with her when you've taken her? Dare you take her back to a civilized port? No. You take out of her what you fancy and then burn or sink her. And what will you get? D'ye think you're going to find their holds stuffed with gold? And after you've taken a few ships, dare you show your faces in a civilized port? Mark my words, you'll find the course you're on neither easy nor profitable."

CARRIED away with the force of his argument, Waters spoke more than he had intended, and more than was altogether safe for him. He could see that Willetts was eyeing him with no friendly glance. It was Dench, however, who replied. He waved his hand, and his tones were not wholly unfriendly.

"See here, Agua," he said. "I've heard ye talk that way before. But ye didn't always talk so. And the time will come maybe when ye'll see things in a better light. Ye yourself had a narrow escape from swinging by London Town, I'll allow. And I'll allow it may

have shaken your nerve somewhat. But get to work with us and ye'll soon see ye've made the better bargain. And as for showing ourselves in a civilized port, what's to stop us if we keep our mouths shut?"

Waters made no reply.

"You want us to stand by the owners' articles," Dench continued. "And it's more easy and profitable, says ye. But we can't stand by 'em. For why? Because the hands aboard this ship will no longer stand for it. They've set their minds on a free cruise, and you and me and all of us'll have to set our course by that."

Waters could find no reply to this argument; and anyhow he had already said quite enough for his own safety. He had no time for further reflection. The eyes of the two men were fixed on him. They were impatient to secure his allegiance. There seemed nothing for it but to give them a seeming assent.

"So be it then," he said at last. "Since we've no option now to do otherwise, you can count me in on it. But listen; my heart is not set on it, and I hold myself the right to leave at any port I choose, and no ill will on either side. Does that accord with your views?"

"It will do," said Dench. He leaned over the table and clapped Waters on the shoulder. "It'll do. And free ye are to leave at any time it suits ye; and no ill will as ye say. Come, Agua, we'll drink to that. Eh, Izak?"

Willetts nodded his head, but said nothing. He was not wholly satisfied. As he had been heard to say more than once, he wanted no half allegiance. "All or nought" was his motto.

Dench poured out some wine from a bottle and they drank to a successful cruise. Dench then turned to Willetts with a great show of friendliness.

"You can count on Agua," he said. "I know him better than you. Leave him to me."

Shortly afterward Willetts went on deck to take his watch. When they were alone Dench leaned over the table toward Waters, one elbow resting on the surface with the forearm extended, and waved his hand backward and forward.

"Ye can't help but be in with us, Agua," he said. "Your interests as well as mine require it. With Peacock out of the way and the ship our own, we're now free to take her to Charleston and do there as we think fit. If needs be, we can get this bird of a lawyer Garner aboard and all his papers as well. We can make him dig up the doubloons for us as well, if we want to. We couldn't do that with Peacock aboard, could we? Ye know that as well as I do.

"And as for falling alongside of all the ships we come across, that notion is good enough for Willetts and that scum for'ard. Let 'em feed their guts on it; it's little else they'll get. I'm not stopping to take a few measly cargoes of sugar and salted herrings. One or two we'll take maybe, just to keep the hands quiet. But Charleston is the port I'm making for, and the sooner we get there the better. Once we've dug up Sennett's Haul, we'll send 'em all a-whistling, Willetts included."

Waters did not understand the whole of this speech. Dench's talk of Sennett's Haul and digging up doubloons was Greek to him. He set it all down as being part of some other knavery that Dench had in view, a scheme with which Agua Richards would also be familiar. He was afraid, however, to ask for particulars lest he betray himself. So he affected an acquaintance with the whole business and asked Dench casually—

"How will you manage with the hands when you've got hold of the doubloons?"

Dench closed one eye very tight and stared at Waters very hard with the other.

"You can leave that to me," he replied after a pause. "None of 'em will get a red ha'penny of it. No one but you and me'll share it. As for that scum for'ard, they can go on and on till they fetch up alongside the hangman for all we care, eh?"

This was all the information that

Waters could get, so he said no more. But he was amazed at the treachery of this person who could plot with one and another in turn and abandon each to his fate without a twinge of conscience. Also he was put on his guard all the more against him. If he could be so lightly a traitor to his own men, so could he turn with the same ease of conscience against his first officer and supposed ally, if thereby he could secure his own advantage.

Truly, Waters told himself, Nicholas Dench was the worst and wickedest creature that it had ever been his lot to encounter, and he would be a fool indeed if he ever trusted him to the smallest jot.

Dench retired to his cabin to sleep. Waters went on the poop to walk and meditate on the villainy of Dench and to plan a course of action that might serve him in the difficult situation he saw ahead of him.

CHAPTER X

CALAMITY

JOSEPHINE BRANT rose from a Madeira chair on the poop of the *Governor of the Indies.* She yawned wearily and then swept her gaze over the leaden blue waters of the surrounding ocean. It was four o'clock in the afternoon, and the steward had just announced that tea was laid in the cabin. The ship was now two days out from the Bermudas, having called at those islands to land some cargo and a few bags of letters. Her stay, however, had been very short—no more in fact than half a day.

Josephine was thoroughly weary of the voyage. It had been an extraordinarily long one. More than ten weeks had elapsed since the *Governor of the Indies* had left the Downs. Moderate winds from the west had retarded her progress throughout nearly the whole of the voyage. But now the end appeared to be not very far off. This afternoon the captain had told her that they were not much more than four hundred miles from their destination. The news had cheered her exceedingly. In a few days, with ordinary good fortune, she would be ashore again among her friends. She trusted that would be the end of her voyaging.

For her the sea had a sinister record. She had come to regard it with something akin to hatred. She associated it with tragedy and misfortune; with danger and fear. And also with the man Agua Richards, now serving under the name of John Smith. With the approach of the termination of the voyage her consciousness of Richards' presence in the ship troubled her less and less. Since that evening more than two months ago when she had dismissed him on the upper deck, he had made no attempt to trouble her in any way. She had by now all but forgotten him. Occasionally she caught a glimpse of him as he went about his work on the upper deck, but he caused her hardly more concern than the appearance of any other sailor would have done.

As she moved off the poop the boatswain's whistle sounded and she heard the hoarse bellow that followed—

"All hands shorten sail."

The captain passed her as she was about to enter the cabin.

"What's the matter, Captain Tanner?" she asked.

"Bad weather, I'm afraid, ma'am; and soon. The glass is falling rapidly."

"Will there be a storm?"

"I have little doubt of it. But there's nothing for you to fear. Maybe we won't get home quite so soon as we expected; that's all."

He went on deck and shortly afterward she heard his voice shouting orders to the crew. During tea time the cabin rolled and swayed, and the meal was one of some discomfort. Also it was hot. Not a breath of air came through the skylight.

At four bells the wind came down in furious gusts from the north. These

continued with increasing frequency and intensity, and by the time it was dark it was blowing a gale with occasional violent squalls. The master hove the ship to when the sun went down, and throughout the night she rode with fair freedom, although occasionally a larger sea than usual came over the forecastle and deluged the waist.

On the second day the master ordered the well to be sounded. When the carpenter returned to him his face looked grave. The result of the sounding showed that the ship had been taking in water at a rate that gave notable cause for alarm. It was clear that some of the seams had opened, or that she had sustained some other injury below the waterline. The pumps were rigged and set going at once.

During the third day the weather moderated somewhat. The crew got some sail on and a course was set for the American mainland which was now, however, much farther distant. Indeed, an observation which the captain had taken at noon—the sun having made a fitful appearance—showed that the ship had been driven more than three hundred miles to the southward.

FOR the rest of that day and throughout the night the ship made very slow and uneasy progress. All the while the men labored at the pumps in their ceaseless endeavor to keep the water in the hold from gaining. And then in the forenoon of the following day the weather grew bad again. The wind came down once more from the north with enormous force.

With the return of bad weather there occurred a dire catastrophe. The mainmast, which had somehow got sprung, broke off short and crashed over the side with a most terrible effect of devastation. For the next quarter of an hour the ship was in a situation of very great peril. She lay over at a dangerous angle and was entirely at the mercy of the seas. Whipped up as they were by the new force of the gale, they now buffeted and smashed and all but overwhelmed the stricken and helpless ship.

With much difficulty the crew succeeded in cutting through the tangle of ropes which held the wreckage to the hull. The mass of spars, canvas and cordage was set adrift and the ship slowly righted herself. Once again she rode the great billows.

The gale continued throughout the day, and on the following morning there were no signs of its moderating. By this time the crew was nearly worn out. Their labors had been incessant, and the results not such as to put heart into them. In the hold the water slowly gained, and the effect was seen in the growing inability of the ship to ride the waves. That evening the weather seemed, if anything, to grow worse. It soon became impossible to work the pumps, and the exhausted men began to abandon themselves to the lethargy of despair.

The situation of those on board the *Governor of the Indies* was now melancholy in the extreme. Heavy with the large and increasing quantity of water in the hold, she was no longer buoyant enough to ride over the enormous billows with any degree of comfort and safety to those on board. Constantly great masses of water surged over the decks. The waist often remained flooded for long periods, since the quantity of water that gathered there had not time to run away ere another flood broke over the decks.

Soon after midnight one tremendous wave swept with devastating effect the whole length and breadth of the ship. Pressed down and submerged for a couple of minutes, it seemed that she could not possibly rise again. Every soul on board thought the end had come. But the waters gradually subsided, and the sorry wreck of the once gallant ship continued its mournful, losing battle with the seas. But her condition was now woeful indeed. That last catastrophic wave had smashed in large sections of

the bulwarks amidships. And beside the fragments of timber there had also been borne overboard an unknown number of the crew.

The end indeed was not very far off.

As morning broke the weather moderated somewhat, although the seas continued to run very high. By this time the *Governor of the Indies* was a total wreck and drifting half submerged through a welter of raging waters that seemed to concentrate in a final effort to engulf her. Seen through the half-light of dawn, the outlook from the poop was entirely hopeless. A horizon no farther distant than a few hundred yards consisted of the tossing wave crests of gigantic and swift moving hills of gray water. The shattered hull rolled with a slowness that told of her helpless condition.

No longer did she answer to the helm; the waves did with her as they pleased, assailing her broadside and smashing her piecemeal. As the light slowly improved the toil worn and hopeless watchers on the small unsubmerged part of the deck turned their eyes instinctively to leeward, but the atmosphere was so thick that they could see nothing but the gray billows nigh to the ship.

But gradually it grew a little lighter and the arc of visibility extended a trifle. And then the watchers became aware of a blurred mass right ahead of them, although whether the gray opaqueness that they saw was a hilly coastline or a low bank of dark clouds they could not for some time determine.

In the saloon the daylight was slower in making itself felt; and the first filtering of it had hardly penetrated the cabin when Josephine heard a hoarse shout from the deck above. A word that sounded like "land" came to her ears. At once a faint ray of hope penetrated her dulled and stupefied consciousness.

A few minutes later she heard some more shouting. And then she heard an ominous thud and felt the cabin shake in a way that the seas had never caused it to do before. She knew that the ship had struck something solid, but whether it were a rock or a sandy bottom, she could not tell. Almost immediately afterward the cabin skylight above was darkened, and simultaneously came a tremendous shock. She could feel that the timbers of the hull were being strained almost to the point of being wrenched apart.

The ship, brought to a halt by her contact with the rock, or whatever it was, had offered an increased resistance to the assault of the sea. A great wave had hit her fair and broken right over her.

For a number of seconds Josephine listened to the horrid grinding and wrenching of the bolts and timbers which followed each devastating crash of the seas. And then she decided she would rather drown on deck than cooped up in this small space. She waded through the slopping sea water to the door of the cabin, and passed through. She climbed three or four steps of the ladder. The passage above was suddenly darkened, and she became aware that some one was descending. She stopped. The person came down toward her. A strong arm grasped her round the waist and drew her up the ladder. They had almost reached the top, when they were both knocked off their feet. Another mighty blow from a sea had sent the ship almost on her beam ends.

Of what followed on this catastrophe Josephine had only the dullest recollection. She was conscious of wood splitting around her. A wash of warm water engulfed her. Her feet ceased to tread on a solid surface. All the time the arm continued to grasp her. She had a confused idea that the ship was rapidly breaking up and that she had somehow contrived to leave it behind. Something struck her on the crown of the head. It became dark and she could not breathe.

Then it was lighter for a few moments and she found she was breathing again. Her feet scraped on a solid surface. She tried to stand; but her feet were swept from under her and she was again

smothered by a rush of water. Her knees struck against something hard and then she felt herself being drawn backward by a powerful current. All at once a hand grasped her again. She thought she was being lifted up and carried, but her senses left her at this point and she knew nothing more.

JOSEPHINE opened her eyes and slowly raised herself on her elbow. She was resting on a sloping ridge of gray shingle in the shadow thrown by a dark cliff. In her ears was still the roar of the sea, but the sounds were fainter. The waters no longer surrounded her. The sun was now high in the blue heavens and shining with a dazzling light over the sea in front of her, giving it a gorgeous blue-green luster. The storm had completely vanished, and of the wreck there was not the least trace to be seen.

She turned her eyes to the left, and there she saw, not far away, the figure of a man standing with his legs somewhat apart. He was hatless and coatless, but wore a large colored kerchief tied round his forehead in such a way that it covered the crown of his head and the back of his neck. He was gazing out to sea, his back was turned toward her; but she recognized him at once by his stature and his pose. It was Agua Richards, or John Smith, recently quartermaster of the *Governor of the Indies,* and the man she feared more than anything else in the world.

She raised herself yet higher, and as she did so he turned his head round and looked at her. He came up to her at once and stood before her with his legs apart and his hands holding on to his belt. His sleeves were torn quite away, and she could see his thick, muscular forearms. Stuck in his belt on his right side was a pistol. It would be in keeping with his character, she thought, that he would essay to preserve that pistol throughout his hazardous passage to the shore. Or had he picked it up on the beach? That would be hardly likely, she decided.

He looked down at her for a time. Then he said—

"You're not hurt overmuch, I hope?"

She staggered on to her knees. The effort cost her some pain. No bones were broken, but bruises she had in plenty, while on the top of her head the hair was stuck down by congealed blood which covered a cut about an inch long. Her clothing, which had dried upon her, was torn in many places to shreds. Ultimately she was under the necessity of tearing off large pieces of the skirt in order to make an effective covering for her shoulders. Her arms were bare.

He helped her on to her feet and told her to try to walk up and down. She found that she could walk, although with some difficulty. Her limbs were exceedingly stiff, and they ached as she moved them. After awhile she sat down again and looked more closely at her surroundings.

The beach of rough shingle on which they rested was no more than a few square yards in extent. All else within view was a maze of jagged rocks over and through which the tide surged and eddied with much force and irregularity. Behind them was a rough wall of rock, of no very great height, it is true, but seemingly unscalable by them in their present condition. Higher up these rocks were somewhat less steep, and they could see scrub and lianas growing, but these were quite beyond their present reach.

Not many yards away from them in either direction the wall of rock fell sheer into the sea, thus blocking their escape by way of the shore. Their haven of refuge was, in fact, somewhat in the nature of a prison; and if they could find no way of scaling the rocks behind them, there seemed a strong likelihood that they would die of starvation and thirst.

Josephine noted these things as her companion had already done, and for a moment or two she doubted if her escape from the shattered and disintegrat-

ing deck of the *Governor of the Indies* had proved such a happy one as she had at first thought. Then suddenly a question surged up into her mind. It was an urgent question, and one that required an immediate answer.

"Was any one else saved?" she asked hurriedly.

He shook his head.

"Not a chance of it," Richards replied. "I watched. She disappeared, or what was left of her, soon after we got to the beach. They all went with her. None of 'em came ashore. There's not a chance that a single one besides ourselves got out of it."

She made no comment, but lowered her head. Could he have observed her face, he would have seen a look of dismay and fear such as all the terrors of the recent storm and shipwreck had not been able to produce upon it. For some time she was silent, and he also. Then she asked him—

"You can form no idea where we are?"

He glanced to the top of the cliff behind them and then swept his eyes round the limited range of their vision.

"I can not tell," he replied at last. "We may be on the shores of South America—the Spanish Main; though I doubt that we could have drifted so far southward. There are many islands to the south. We may have struck one of 'em."

THEY fell silent again. A large sea bird flew out from the rocks away to their left and circled high up over the waves, while at the same time it gave forth a series of mournful cries. It disappeared once more, and the silence again remained unbroken save for the steady and ceaseless roar of the surf. After a time Josephine spoke again.

"These islands you speak of—are they peopled?"

"Some of 'em. But not all. We must contrive to move away from here—somehow." He glanced upward again at the cliff face. "Then maybe we shall find people, or at any rate food and drink. But we must contrive to get to the top. We shall starve, else."

"More likely to die of thirst," Josephine said.

She moistened her lips. Her throat was excessively dry. Both of them indeed were suffering from thirst. They must find a way out from their prison or else a death far worse than drowning would be their fate.

He walked to the cliff face and examined it closely, feeling it with his hands in order to test its hardness. He stepped back and glanced upward to the top, running his eyes over the whole of the cliff face. Then he looked again at her. She was half sitting, half lying on the shingle. It was clear that she was not capable of exerting much strength as yet. For her, at all events, the climb up that cliff was a sheer impossibility.

"Maybe I can get to the top myself," he said to her. "And then I can haul you up with one of those plant ropes. Get there we must, somehow."

She nodded wearily.

"Do you try," she said. "And I doubt not I can follow with the aid of your plant ropes when you get them. But look!" she exclaimed suddenly, pointing to the rocks to their left. "If I mistake not, the tide has fallen. Maybe we can contrive to get round the rocks there and find a more suitable way of ascent."

She knelt upright. She had lost her listless manner. He looked in the direction where she pointed. It was true; the tide had fallen somewhat. More dark rocks were showing their heads above the water, and the surge of the waves over them was less violent. It seemed that they might now venture on those rocks without being swept away. They might find in that direction a practicable way out of their prison.

Richards walked to the end of the beach and examined the rocks. He stepped on to one of them that was easily within reach. A white smother of sea foam washed around his feet. The water level dropped a few feet as the wave

receded. He stood there for a few minutes while he took a survey of his near surroundings. Finally he leaped ashore again and went up to Josephine.

"I do think we can get round there with luck," he said. "We'll try it."

After some difficulty and without becoming unduly wet, they managed to reach an unsubmerged reef just beyond the extreme end of the small headland, and there they found they could reach a small sloping shelf on the cliff, which seemed to afford a practicable way of reaching the top. Richards jumped and succeeded in getting a foothold and handhold on the ledge. Then, with his assistance, Josephine effected a less confident leap. But she arrived in safety and without hurt and, after resting for awhile, they began to climb upward.

Before long they reached a sort of gully up which their progress, although rough, became much easier. Farther on the gully became a small ravine lined with stones and boulders. It had the appearance of having been at one time the bed of a torrent, but there was no water in it now. Tree ferns grew in abundance on the sides.

The stony bed of the ravine gradually came to an end and the vegetation became very much thicker and more tangled, retarding their progress and adding greatly to the labor of their climb. The boughs interlaced over their heads, shutting out the rays of the sun. Nevertheless, it was very hot indeed and the atmosphere felt clammy and stifling.

They could see not more than a yard or two in any direction. The breeze from the ocean did not penetrate into these recesses. There was not a breath of air nor any movement in the foliage. They could no longer hear the noise of the surf against the rocks on the shore, but in its place there was a continuous hum of insects. They saw no sign of life, however, or movement of any sort.

Josephine was now panting and showing grievous signs of exhaustion. Richards also felt not a little the effects of the oppressive heat and close atmosphere. And they were both suffering very much from thirst. Richards noted the failing strength of the girl and bade her rest awhile. It was a poor resting place that he chose, though the best that could be found. The moist earth was covered with creepers, and the lower boughs of the surrounding trees and shrubs intertwined to form a harsh tangle of stems, affording neither a couch for seating nor an effective space for standing. By holding on to the branch of a tree Josephine contrived to get some support for her exhausted body.

RICHARDS was anxious to press on, for the day was far advanced and it was imperative that they should at least discover fresh water, and a resting place before the darkness set in. He had thoughts of going on ahead by himself, but he feared that he would not find his companion again in that jungle. So he waited a few minutes, and then, as Josephine appeared to show signs of a little returned strength, he urged her to try again.

"In a short while we shall be at the top," he said. "It's of no great height, I'm sure. And then we may see our way out of this infernal wood. Come."

He aided her as best he could while at the same time he parted, or cut through with his knife, the stems that retarded their progress. Josephine responded boldly, and after determined efforts they found themselves on level ground. The forest, however, showed no signs of leaving them. Satisfied that no good purpose was to be served by forcing their way haphazard through the undergrowth, Richards began to search for a suitable tree to climb, hoping that from the highest branches he might at least discover a way out from this awful wood. He found one before very long and quickly hoisted himself upward. For a few minutes he remained hidden from view. When he reappeared his manner was notably more animated than it had been.

"I'll lead you out of this," he said. "And soon. Over there the ground falls away, and beyond it is a tall hill, grass grown on the top and nearly free from scrub. There are valleys around it, and I doubt not that in one of 'em we shall find water. Let us get to that hill. From the top of it we can see the lie of the land."

With his help, Josephine toiled painfully up the slope. The way was not so hard, after a time. They surmounted the rising ground and began to descend. Through the trees they saw the slope of the hill beyond; the sides were covered with scrub. All at once they stopped and listened intently. A low murmur had come to their ears; it was the sound of running water. Richards hastily thrust his way through the bushes, and Josephine struggled after him. At the bottom of the declivity, a few yards ahead, they saw a stream of running water. Josephine dropped to the ground.

"Thank God. Thank God," she murmured.

Richards bent down and patted her on the shoulder.

"A brave lass you are," he said.

But Josephine was not looking at the water, nor the plantains and avocados which grew in abundance on the farther side of the stream. And faint and thirsty as she was, it was not these things that inspired the cry of thanksgiving that came from her lips as she sank to the ground.

She pointed to the slope on the farther side of the valley.

"Look!" she cried. "A house!"

"Eh?" said Richards. "By the Lord, it's true."

Their vision had not deceived them. About thirty yards higher up the stream, half hidden by a clump of palmetto trees, was a small wooden structure; it was a hut rather than a house. But it was the handiwork of man, and civilized man.

"There will be white folk here," said Josephine. "They will aid us, without doubt."

Richards nodded. He helped her on to her feet and then pointed to the stream.

"Drink," he said. "And we will see about the white folk afterwards."

They made their way to the water's edge, and for some time they were engaged in slaking their terrific thirst. Richards then plucked a few plantains, which he brought to Josephine and divided with her. They ate them seated by the waterside, occasionally drinking afresh. All this time no one approached them, and the sense of solitude remained unbroken.

Although but little recovered as yet from her exhaustion, Josephine was the first to rise to her feet.

"Come," she said. "Let us see what the house contains."

THEY approached the hut. As they drew near they could see that its appearance betokened less of the presence of human beings than their first glance had led them to suppose. It was a very small structure, no more than fifteen feet square, and it was in a state of extreme dilapidation. Its walls were constructed of hewn timber. The roof, which was a thatch of palmetto leaves, had fallen in at one corner, and the door, which was partly open, was held by only one rusty hinge. There were windows in two sides, but they were mere openings in the walls. Creepers covered the whole of one side, and the scrub had grown right up to the walls and even appeared to be trying to penetrate the half open door.

Clearly the hut had been deserted for a very long time, and Josephine, as she surveyed it, lost a deal of the enthusiasm that had come to her when she first beheld it. Nevertheless, the fact remained that civilized people had been there at some time. Since white people had lived there doubtless there were others not very far off.

They entered the doorway. The interior showed also that no one had occupied it for a very long time. The floor

was the rough soil of the neighborhood, and there was no furniture of any sort. A broken mattock in one corner, three empty and blackened bottles, a rusty pannikin and a few timber stakes were all that the hut contained.

"Not much sign of recent habitation," exclaimed Richards, after a brief survey of the interior. "It will serve as a shelter. And there may be others nearby with folk dwelling in 'em."

They went outside again. The sun had now gone down and the short twilight was well advanced toward complete darkness. Richards turned to Josephine and pointed inside the hut.

"There's a shelter for you at all events," he said. "And a door that you can close on yourself; there's a bar on it."

Josephine made no reply; nor did she move a step toward the entrance. For a few seconds they stood facing each other without speaking. And then Richards pointed once more to the door.

"You have nothing to fear from me," he said. "I swear you've nothing to fear from me; tonight or any other night. Or at any time."

Still she stood and hesitated and made no reply.

"See here," he said.

He plucked forth the pistol from his belt. He examined the charge and the priming. Then, holding it by the barrel, he extended it toward her.

"It's loaded," he said. "The charge is now thoroughly dry, and the flint is good. Take it and keep it always by you, if you fear me." Then he added slowly, "And if ever you have cause to fear me, if ever you like not what I am about to do—use it."

In a thoroughly matter of fact way Josephine took the pistol from him.

"Very well," she said, while at the same time she looked him straight in the eyes. "And do you not fail to remember, Mr. Richards, that I have this pistol at all times by me."

"I'll not let myself forget it," he replied, somewhat surprised by the vehemence of her manner. "You could trust me without that pistol, madam, just as I trust you with it. Nevertheless, do as you say; keep it loaded and always by you."

He strode away for a few paces. Then he turned.

"Do you see that other grove of palmettos?" he said. "I shall be somewhere in there. If any danger assails you in this hut, you will know where to seek me. But let me remind you: that pistol contains but one charge; there is no other. So use it not except in case of direst need."

CHAPTER XI

THE TRAGEDY OF THE DUTCH SNOW

SEVERAL weeks had passed by following the day when Nicholas Dench was made captain of the *Ten Commandments* in place of Captain Peacock, and no ships of any description were sighted. The brigantine had arrived in warmer regions, and was now sailing slowly through bright blue seas, the wind being almost always light airs varied only by occasional calms.

The behavior and discipline of the crew had shown no amendment since Captain Dench had taken command. Indeed, if anything, they were worse than before.

It was just after the morning watch and while Waters was having breakfast that he heard an unusual noise and bustle proceeding from above. As soon as he had finished his meal he hurried on deck. Most of the hands were gathered forward on the starboard side and gazing with much intentness ahead. Waters had no need to look; the thing that he had dreaded for weeks had at length come to pass; a sail was in sight.

He mounted on to the forecastle and took a careful sight of the distant ship through a spyglass. She proved to be a small three-masted vessel, snow rigged, and distant about five or six miles. A

fairly stiff breeze was blowing from a quarter that suited the progress of the brigantine in the direction in which she was sailing, and it soon became clear that she was fast overhauling the ship ahead. The latter proved to be a Dutch merchantman and, judging by her size, little capable of beating off her pursuer if it came to a fight.

After a time the brigantine drew near enough to the snow to open out on her with the forward guns. Two only were served and they were pointed by Dolan, the gunner. He aimed at the rigging and made very good practise. It was not very long before the effects were seen. Large rents appeared in the topsails, the standing rigging was cut through in many places, and bits of spars were knocked away. The result of all this was that the snow began to lose way after about half an hour's cannonade, and the brigantine began to overhaul her much more quickly.

The Dutchman then began to fire back at her pursuer, but her armament was much inferior both in the number of guns and weight of metal. Nevertheless, the crew of the brigantine did not escape wholly without hurt. Two men were knocked over. One of them was carried below shrieking loudly, his shoulder having been torn open by a piece of the bulwark. The other was knocked senseless by a falling piece of a spar.

The chase was brought to an end by a lucky shot from the bow gun of the *Ten Commandments*, which hit the short trysail mast of the snow and toppled it over the side. With that catastrophe there ended all chance of her escape. After about ten minutes spent in clearing away the hampering wreckage, they brought the ship up to the wind and lay to as a token of surrender. The brigantine ceased to fire. Captain Dench brought her to within less than a quarter of a mile of the Dutchman and then hauled his wind.

By this time the day was well advanced. The chase had taken many hours. Having stopped the way on his craft, Captain Dench lowered a couple of boats and a crowd of his ruffians tumbled into them. Willetts took charge of the boarding party and soon had them pulling hard for the Dutch ship. Dench remained on board the *Ten Commandments*.

Waters watched the boats go alongside the snow and the men climb on board. No resistance was offered. He saw the men ranging about the deck of the prize, but most of them soon disappeared below. Dench stood on the poop, gazing at the other ship. He made no remark to Waters, nor did he seem to notice his presence. His attention appeared to be wholly taken up with the prize. As for Waters, he decided that he had now seen as much as he cared, and moreover the darkness was beginning to fall rapidly. Taking one last look at the captured ship, he went below and entered his cabin.

He soon found that he could not remain there in peace. A dreadful foreboding and a restlessness took possession of him. He could not sit down, and he found himself trying to walk to and fro in the small area. All the time his mind was concerned with the Dutch ship and the events that were taking place aboard her. He had dire fears for her unhappy crew, now doubtless at the mercy of the ruffians from the *Ten Commandments*.

He had observed the countenances of the men during the chase, and he was able to judge how poorly the life of any creature would weigh with them in the balance with their gains or their security. At length there came a moment when he could remain in the cabin no longer. With a feverish haste he ascended to the upper deck once more.

IT WAS now quite dark, and the black outline of the snow was barely visible. A few lights showed on her deck, however, and sometimes they moved to and fro. Captain Dench was nowhere

to be seen. It appeared that he had also gone on board the snow. Most of the crew were now aboard of her. Not more than ten or a dozen remained in the *Ten Commandments*. The gunner, Dolan, appeared to be in charge of the upper deck. He was leaning over the bulkward amidships and gazing at the lights across the water.

Waters had not been on deck for more than a couple of minutes when there arose a confused uproar on the deck of the other ship. It lasted a few seconds, and then there came across the water a most dreadful scream that made his blood run cold. It was a sound that told of agony and terror, and the silence that followed spoke of death. The silence, however, was short lived. Screams broke out afresh, and cries for mercy. For several minutes these sounds continued at intervals.

Overcome with horror, Waters turned away from the bulwark and placed his hands over his ears to shut out the dreadful sounds. He needed not to be told what was happening. The unspeakable villains who had gone aboard the prize were murdering the crew. At length silence settled down once more. The pirates had accomplished their horrid purpose.

For more than an hour Waters paced the poop. No further noises of note came from the snow. But all at once he heard a hail from the water not far away. It was answered by some one on the deck of the brigantine. Seemingly the boats were returning. He looked over the side, but could see nothing; it was too dark. Then all at once he noticed a bright red light glowing on the deck of the snow. It flickered and grew brighter. Flames shot up the lower rigging and spread gradually along the side of the ship. The ruffians, having murdered the crew and rifled the ship, had now set her on fire.

Captain Dench returned to the *Ten Commandments* in a surly frame of mind. From his looks and his manner it was clear that the results of the capture had been very small. The men too were in a bad humor, and as they hoisted the boats and prepared to make sail, which they did with no very great willingness, they gave vent to oaths and curses.

Dench afterward informed Waters that the Dutch ship had carried a cargo of sugar, which as plunder was worthless to him and his men. A few kegs of spirits were brought away. But of money and other valuables they had found hardly anything worth the taking, just about the value of a hundred and fifty English pounds; a small reward indeed for such a cutthroat business.

Having set sail, the brigantine drew away from the burning ship. The wind, however, had fallen very light, and it was nearly midnight before they lost sight of her. Waters watched the lights and the reflection fade out as the brigantine left them far away astern.

He kept the middle watch that night, and at four in the morning he retired to his berth. No sleep came to him, however. Those despairing shrieks that he had heard coming through the darkness on the evening just gone still rang in his ears, and he prayed that the chance would soon be offered him to part company with this accursed ship and the vile murderers who made up her crew.

THE effect on Waters of the tragic events just related was such as to render him despondent in the extreme. It was fortunate, perhaps, for him, that the men were too much engrossed in their affairs to take heed of his countenance and too disappointed at the results of their capture rightly to interpret his looks. Doubtless if they heeded him at all they thought he shared their disappointment at their failure to find riches in the captured ship.

Meanwhile the time was drawing on, and the stores of food and water showed signs of running low. The water especially was scarce and bad. They had

nearly crossed the Atlantic Ocean, however, and the land could not be very far away. It would be necessary before long to enter some harbor in order to replenish the stores. Waters began to look forward with almost feverish anxiety to the time when they should sight land.

To his fancy a dark shadow seemed to lie over the seas through which they sailed. The sunlight seemed clouded over, although in fact the sun shone with a force that made the decks hot to the touch. The seas around were blue to excess, but to him there appeared to be no brightness in the waters; while the sun, when it sank in the evening, seemed to leave a blood-red trail in the sky and the sea in that direction where they were sailing.

He longed to see the last of this evil ship, and he resolved at all costs to take the very first opportunity of getting away from her. He determined that if only he could once get ashore at any place he would stay there, even if the land were desolate and uninhabited.

A couple of days after the plundering of the Dutch ship he passed, on the upper deck, the sailor Ned Owen. He was sitting on a hatch with his head sunk in his hands. As Waters approached he looked up. His eyes were wide open with terror and he looked as if he had seen ghosts walking abroad.

"What's wrong with you, my lad?" Waters said to him.

Owen raised his arm slightly and Waters saw that his hand was shaking.

"Them Dutchmen," he said in a quavering voice. "I seed 'em all last night. I sees 'em every night. Last night I see all of 'em. One by one they comed afore my eyes. My God, I can see 'em now when I shuts my eyes. They stares at me. God! They stares at me and gibbers. Corpses come to life again. S'elp me God, I can see 'em; I can see 'em."

His head sank on his knees. After a time he lifted it again and plucked Waters by the arm.

"Was you aboard the Dutchman, mister?" he asked. "No? There was awful things done that night. That Willetts is a devil. He killed three of 'em with his own hands. Bound hands and feet they was, and he cuts 'em down with a cutlass. Ugh! I can see 'em now. And Cap'n Dench, he's worse'n Willetts. Smiles he does, and talks to 'em favorable like. They thought he was a-going to set 'em free. But he's hard as stone is Dench. There's no mussy in him, no more'n a tiger."

Waters was about to turn away when Owen plucked his sleeve.

"Listen," said he. "Bend down."

Waters lowered his head. As he did so Owen glanced furtively along the deck. Then he placed his mouth close to Waters' ear and whispered:

"Say, Mister Agua Dick, you've been fair to me and I owes ye something. And now I have to give ye warning. It's this. Take heed of Cap'n Dench. He's got no liking for ye. I heard him say he's altered course for an island called the Flying Jib. And I heard him say as you wasn't to be let ashore. And he said—"

Owen stopped suddenly, and Waters saw him glancing fearfully over his shoulder. He turned round and saw Nicholas Dench standing a few yards away. He was sure he was not there when he bent down to listen to Owen, and neither of them had heard his approach. Dench had his eyes on them. Suddenly he shouted to Owen angrily:

"Say, you! Can ye find nothing better to do than lumber the deck with your ugly carcass? Jump down below and lend the cooper a hand."

Owen sprang to his feet and fled. Dench came up to Waters. He nodded and smiled.

"We should be making land somewhere hereabouts in a few days, Agua, I reckon," he said with an appearance of affability.

"Yes?" said Waters. "The Indies are nearby?"

"Some part of 'em."

Waters nodded but said nothing.

Dench gave him a sidelong glance. After a minute or two he said—

"Ye'll be wanting to get ashore, I should guess."

Waters looked at him and pondered a while before replying.

"I think we should all like to get ashore," he said cautiously.

Dench laughed softly. It was not a mirthful laugh, and Waters wondered what was in his mind.

"To be sure, to be sure," said Dench after a moment. "We'd all like to get ashore I should guess. Because why? Ain't some of us tired of seeing nothing but sea water and flying fishes? And some of us, maybe, are tired of the cruise. And maybe some are tired of the happenings thereof. To be sure, we want to get ashore."

After a pause he added:

"We're making for the Flying Jib."

He looked narrowly at Waters.

"The Flying Jib? An island hereabouts?"

"Aye, an island. Ye've never heard of it?"

Again Waters observed Dench gazing at him with intentness. He shook his head.

"I never heard of it," he replied decisively.

Dench laughed again and turned away without another word.

Waters was not long in discovering that Dench's conduct toward him began to undergo a notable change. Dench spoke to him far less than he used to do. Formerly he had been in the habit of consulting with him on his projects. Now he consulted him not at all. With Izak Willetts, however, he was often in conference, and the pair of them spent a great deal of time together. More than once Waters interrupted one of their conferences, and each time they broke off their discussion when they observed his approach. It was clear that they did not wish him to hear what they were discussing.

Dench, however, did not display positive enmity toward him. But from time to time Waters had the feeling that Dench was watching him very closely. He began to fear that Dench suspected him, not only of being hostile to his schemes and his policy, but of being other than the person he pretended to be. He was much disquieted, and the circumstance made him more than ever eager to make his escape.

IT WAS approaching eight bells in the afternoon when they first sighted the Flying Jib. It appeared as a hazy smudge on the starboard bow and it was distant no more than about seven or eight miles when it came into view, the weather at the time being not very clear. As they drew near they could see that the island was covered with woods, and Dench remarked to Waters that, small as the island was, there would be fresh water there in plenty.

It was too late in the day to attempt to find an anchorage, and moreover, as they went in closer, they could see that there were many reefs lying off the island. Accordingly they stood out to sea once more, and throughout the night they stood off and on, the breeze being very light. When morning broke the weather was hazy, but they could just perceive the outline of the island, which was then somewhat less than four miles distant. They at once stood in toward the most northerly point. A long and uneasy swell was rolling down from the north, and, although the surface of the waves was glassy and unbroken, a very heavy surf was breaking on the beach.

The reefs to seaward were marked by very large patches of white, which showed that the swell was breaking there also with much violence. The appearance of the weather side of the island was indeed most unpromising, and Captain Dench accordingly altered course in order to round the northern point.

They could see that the leeward side of the island was much less forbidding, although there were many reefs there also. But the sea broke on them with

much less force, and there seemed to be a large area of smooth and unbroken water between the reefs and the beach which might afford good anchorage, could they succeed in passing the outer reefs in safety.

Dench ordered Waters to mount with him to the foretop. From this lofty perch they obtained a much clearer view of the island and its approaches. Off the lee side the sunken reef appeared to extend, with one or two breaks, the whole length of the island. The broken water which they had seen from the deck below was now clearly marked as an irregular band. There seemed to be a fairly large gap about a mile or so to the southward. As soon as he saw it Dench shouted an order to the helmsman to alter the course a few points in order to bring the ship to a suitable point just opposite to it.

"There's a safe passage through the reef just there," he said to Waters.

"A good passage without a doubt," Waters agreed.

The opening seemed to be wide enough with plenty to spare, and it was wholly free from broken water. Inside the line of reefs there was a kind of lagoon with an average breadth of about three-quarters of a mile. Its appearance was that of smooth glass, and it was tinted a pale green.

Dench decided to enter without more ado. He descended to the deck and sent a man with the leadline into the starboard chains. Waters was directed to remain aloft to con the ship. A speaking trumpet was passed up to him for the purpose. Under his directions they headed boldly for the opening in the reef. After repeated casts the leadsman found no bottom, and it was with complete confidence, therefore, that Waters watched the lines of broken water gradually drawing nearer and nearer on either side of the ship.

They were almost level with the opening when the leadsman hauled in the slack of his dripping line. Waters watched him closely, for he perceived by his action that he had taken a sounding at last. The man turned his face upward.

"Ma-a-a-ark severn!"

Seven fathoms—and a minute or two previously no bottom. The change was somewhat abrupt; but there was plenty of water so far. The ship had entered the gap in the reef when there arose once more the chant of the leadsman—

"And ha-a-a-alf six!"

A shelving bottom; but still ample water. In a few minutes the ship had passed the lines of breakers and was gliding slowly through an area of smooth water. As Dench had foretold, the passage had been a safe and an easy one.

Shortly afterward Waters was ordered down, and the hands were sent aloft to take in sail. Not very long after passing the opening in the reef, the *Ten Commandments* dropped anchor in six fathoms. The shore was less than half a mile away, a shelving beach with no surf to speak of. Not far distant they could see a small stream trickling its way over a slight depression on the shore. Calm water all around them, a firm holding ground for the anchor, an unlimited supply of drinking water less than a mile away; no better anchorage for their purpose could have been found anywhere.

WHERE the ship lay at anchor the sea water was clear almost beyond belief. Looking down into it, one could see the sandy bottom of the anchorage quite plainly, despite the fact that it was more than thirty feet below the water.

Shortly after the anchor was dropped Captain Dench brought on deck a loaded musket and discharged it into the air. Immediately following the report three birds about the size of gulls arose with a mighty to-do and flew squawking along the shore until eventually they disappeared among the trees farther south. This was the only sign of life, apart from the vegetation, that they saw on the

shore, and after this disturbance the silence and the stillness returned to continue unbroken. Of human life or habitation there was not the smallest trace.

"A Godforsaken place," said Dench to Waters as he laid aside his gun. "But not unfavorable for our purpose."

"You might go farther and fare worse," Waters replied briefly.

The time was then approaching noon, and the hands were piped to dinner. Immediately after dinner Dench ordered a boat away, and in it he and Willetts were rowed to the shore. Waters was not asked to go with them, and he deemed it wise not to appear anxious to go. Doubtless an opportunity would present itself before very long, and if not, he was determined to leave the ship some time during the dark hours and reach the shore by swimming if no other way offered. Small as was the island, and desolate as it appeared, he determined to hide himself in the thickets which abounded there until the ship sailed.

It was after sundown when the boat returned to the ship. All the men were fatigued and foot weary, as sailors usually are when they venture on dry land after a long time spent afloat. They brought with them large quantities of fruit; coconuts, plantains, wild oranges and limes; almost a boatload. The men ate them in large quantities and with a relish that few can understand who have not lived for a long period without fruit of any sort.

The night was very warm, and there was not a breath of air. Many of the men slept on deck, and not a few remained awake the whole night through. Waters was awake most of the night. The conditions were not favorable for his escape. He could have left the ship by swimming without being discovered. But he decided not to venture unless no better way offered itself. There might be sharks in the lagoon, though he had seen none up to now. The ship would remain there for a few days at least, and he would be unlucky indeed, if he could not find an opportunity of leaving her with much smaller risk to himself.

CHAPTER XII

DAVID WATERS RUNS

ON THE following morning the weather was thick and the sky overcast. Beyond the reef the swell seemed to have increased, for the noise of the breakers was much greater than on the day before. Captain Dench feared bad weather, and he ordered up a spare cable and bent on the sheet anchor. During the forenoon, however, the weather cleared and the sun came out; but the surf continued to break with much violence on the reef, showing that the swell was very heavy outside.

Just before dinner Dench ordered the cooper to sway up the water casks from the hold ready for towing ashore. Waters heard Willetts say that he would go ashore with the cooper. He feared to ask Dench to allow him to go, as that person might suspect his anxiety to leave the ship, and take measures to secure him. But he had taken many furtive glances around while his movements were not observed, and he had determined to make an attempt to escape ashore that very night in the skiff.

After dinner Dench retired to his cabin to sleep. Waters remained on deck to watch the departure of the watering party. When all was ready for them to go, the word was passed to the cooper that Willetts was too ill to go with them. The fellow, it appeared, had gorged himself with unripe fruit during dinner. The cooper was about to set off without him, when Waters made a sudden resolution.

"Since Willetts is too ill to go," he said, "I may as well go instead."

The cooper made no demur, and Waters quickly went down into the boat and ordered the crew to shove off. He was ill equipped for a long sojourn on a seemingly desolate island, having

nothing but what he stood in. But he joyfully seized the opportunity, since such a one might never again present itself.

The boat grounded on the beach not far from the stream and all got out. The cooper and his men at once hauled the casks ashore and began their work of cleaning them out and filling them with fresh water. Waters strolled slowly along the beach, stopping occasionally to pick up a shell or a colored pebble. All the while he watched the men by the stream to observe if they were noticing his movements. They, however, had no attention to bestow on him; when they were not working they were skylarking among themselves, throwing pebbles and splashing water at each other.

Waters turned into the woods at the back of the beach, observing at the same time that the men did not notice his withdrawal. The woods closed around him; he had escaped.

His first impulse was to take to his heels and get as far away from the boat's crew as he could in the shortest possible time. A little reflection, however, showed him that it would be wiser to find the stream of water and make his way along its banks, or as near to them as he could, in order to reach a good hiding place far from the shore. Whatever happened, he told himself, he must not for the present lose the bearings of that stream.

Accordingly, he crept as noiselessly as he could through the trees and undergrowth in the direction where he judged the stream bed to be. He was not long in finding it. It was a narrow run that surged rapidly over a stony bed between rather steep banks. The trees on either side approached very near, and higher up the stream they grew thickly on the banks, closing over the stream a canopy of boughs and green leaves.

From where he now found himself he could plainly hear the voices of the men engaged in filling the casks. He could not see them and neither could they see him. He decided, however, to lose no time in withdrawing farther up the stream. Once their task was completed the men would hardly return to the ship without making a search for him.

He made his way along the river bank in the direction away from the sea. Gradually the voices died away and after a time he placed a sufficient distance between himself and the men to make it highly difficult if not impossible for them to find him. He now paused to take stock of his surroundings. The afternoon was becoming well advanced, and he knew that in little more than an hour's time the sun would go down. He would have to find a shelter for the night somewhat better than the tangle of the woodland afforded.

He had reached by this time a place well beyond the region of the shore, and for the time being he felt reasonably safe from discovery. He had long passed beyond the range of his late shipmates' voices. Once he thought he heard a faint hallooing; possibly it was the boat's crew shouting for him to return with them to the ship.

As he advanced he found the country become more and more hilly. The woods also grew thicker in those parts and more tangled, a feature that impeded his progress not a little. He was unable to go far before nightfall.

For more than an hour he thrust his way through this tangle, all the while sweating freely from the heat and his own exertions. In that time he had progressed by a devious route a distance of not much more than a mile from the shore. The sun had gone down and it was nearly dark when he came upon a wall of rock which formed, in part, the base of a low but rather steep hill.

At the bottom of this rock he discovered by chance a small cavity about six feet deep, seemingly hollowed out by nature. It was quite a low cavity; he could enter it only by stooping. But if he were content to sit or lie down, it would afford him a fair shelter and hiding place for the time being, since it was well hidden by the bushes.

By this time he was very hot and

weary, and wholly disinclined to go any farther. He decided to make this tiny cavern his resting place for this night at all events. Accordingly he crouched low and crept inside. He extended his length on the hard floor, but he had hardly done so when he fell fast asleep.

FOR two days and nights Waters remained hidden on the island, safe from discovery and interference for the time being, but fearful none the less of venturing far from his retreat. He went no farther than was necessary to procure water and fruit for his sustenance. He saw no traces of the pirates, nor did he hear the voices of any of them. He began to hope that they had sailed away and left him in peace.

He made the tiny cavern his permanent abode. The thickness of the woods in the vicinity was all to the good, but on account of its nearness to the brigantine's anchorage he did not feel wholly secure. He would have liked to find another retreat rather more distant.

Not far away was a rather tall hill with a grassy summit that he decided would make an excellent point for surveying the island. From there, also, he would probably be able to obtain a view of the anchorage. The absence of trees round the sides of the hill had, however, made him dislike the idea of venturing upon it during the daytime, lest he betray his presence to chance prowlers.

However, on the afternoon of the third day, as the sun was near setting, he decided to venture. One side of the hill was now in deep shadow, and he thought he could mount that side without danger of discovery and obtain a short survey from the summit before dark.

Accordingly he set forth and crept through the woods in the direction of that side of the hill. He had proceeded not much more than a quarter of a mile when he was startled by the sharp flurry of a tiny pair of wings in front of his face. A small bird of bright plumage, disturbed by his approach, had flown off a bough close to his head and fluttered away into the bushes to the left. The sudden movement caused him to stay his advance, and he paused.

It was well for him that he stopped when he did, for at that moment his eye caught sight of the figures of two men not three yards away from him. He could see that both of the men were listening intently, and one of them had laid his hand on a pistol which he wore at his belt.

He recognized them at once; they were Nicholas Dench and Izak Willetts. Dench was squatting on the bole of a fallen tree. His three-cornered hat was resting on his knee, and one of his hands was raised to his neck. He had just paused in the act of wiping off the sweat with the corner of a large colored kerchief that encircled his forehead. Willetts was sprawled on the ground in front of him. He was the one with the half drawn pistol. Both of them were motionless and silent.

Afraid almost to breathe, Waters drew slowly and carefully backward for a yard or so, and thus managed to place a slightly thicker curtain of undergrowth between himself and the two men. That was as much as he could do. He was too near them to risk flight. Their suspicions had been aroused by the noise of his approach and the startled flight of the bird. So he lay flat and remained perfectly still.

Dench and Willetts also remained still for a time, and Waters had no doubt that they were listening and watching. At length one of them spoke. It was the voice of Willetts that Waters heard.

"It's nothing, Nick. Or a snake, maybe."

Dench did not reply at once.

"No," he said at last. "'Twas nothing. But I thought one time as some one was drawing nigh to us. It sounded like some one was a-parting the bushes."

"Ye thought it might be him as we sought?"

"'Twas likely."

"He's skinned out clean. And the devil's own job it'll be to find him again in this mush of trees and scrub."

"He'll not escape us for long. This island is nothing in size. We needn't worry ourselves overmuch. We'll get him."

"Ye say it ain't Agua at all as we've been sailing with?" said Willetts. "Well, I don't take ye."

"I'm sure it ain't. I've had my suspicions for a very long time. And now I'm sure; doubly sure."

"He's been acting queer, I'll allow. But if it ain't Agua, well then he's the devil's own image of him. And then again, if Agua ain't been aboard the *Ten Commandments,* where the devil has he been?"

"That's more than I can say. We left Agua Dick behind, and we took this fellow in place of him. How it happened I can't say. Maybe he'll tell us before the sharks have his carcass."

"Ye don't think as anything happened to Agua? A tap on the head maybe, as resulted in him forgetting who he is and caused him to act queer? Such things do happen—"

"NOT on your soul," interrupted Dench. "Ye haven't heard the whole of it. Ye say it don't happen that two men turn up dead alike about the figurehead? Don't it? I'll tell ye something. D'ye remember when Agua Richards was a-lying locked up in Newgate Prison awaiting for to be brought up for trial? And ye know that I went to a lawyer fellow of the name of Hardmuth in London Town for to help drag him away from Execution Dock? Well, what if I was coming away from the house of that same lawyer just while Agua was lying bolted up in prison, mark ye, and and I see a-coming up to the same door a man the same size and with the same figurehead of Agua Richards? What d'ye say to that?"

"Ye saw him?"

"With these same deadlights of mine I saw him. And I'll take my oath as that man was the same man as we're a-looking for now."

"What would he be doing with this lawyer?"

"Better say what would the lawyer be doing with him."

"Ye mean to say he might ha' been putting him up to act spy on the doings of us aboard the *Ten Commandments?*"

"I do mean just that."

"Then if that's so, God help his sneaking carcass when we gets him aboard. For I reckon the hands'll want a little bit of gentle sport afore they tips him to the sharks."

"Ye may say that. But I reckon as we'll have the whole of God's truth out of him before he goes."

"Maybe so. But then again, maybe he won't like to talk."

"Won't he? I guess I'll see to that. D'ye remember the Spaniard from Porto Caballo as thought he wasn't going to talk? It took him just ten minutes and no more to make him alter his mind."

"I reckon it won't make much difference to him whether he talks or not. The hands'll want their sport, and ye can bet your soul they won't let a traitor off with an easy end."

"That's their affair. He'll talk to me first, though. I guess they can do what they like with him afterward."

Dench stood up and stretched himself.

"We'll get back aboard," he said. "This rat can wait till tomorrow."

He turned to walk away, and Willetts also drew himself on to his feet. To the great relief of Waters the two men disappeared.

Waters drew a deep breath and moved slightly to ease his cramped limbs. All the time he had been crouching within earshot of the two miscreants, he dared not move a limb the slightest lest he betray his presence. He had had a very narrow escape, and his reflections were not pleasant ones.

This affair made him more than ever anxious to find a suitable hiding place

far from the anchorage. He returned to his cavern, since it was now too dark to attempt to explore the island. Immediately after daybreak on the following morning, however, he set out to climb the bare hill near at hand in order to obtain without any further delay a better knowledge of the plan and configuration of the island.

Slowly he forced his way through the dense woods.

After a considerable time he began to mount a small wooded hill, on the farther side of which was the bare hill for which he was making. The woods, as he progressed, became rather less dense, and when he arrived at the top of the rise he found that he could see the whole of a shallow valley which lay in front of the bare hill.

While he was about to descend the slope his eye ranged along the valley to the extreme right, and he at once caught his breath in astonishment, for on the side of the hill and backed by a group of fan palms was a small house. It was a mere wooden structure with a roof of thatch, and very small. But a house it was nonetheless, and his hopes rose a great deal on beholding it.

He began to walk toward the hut. When he drew nearer he saw that it was in a poor state of repair, and he decided that it was not only uninhabited but that it must have been so for a very long time.

But another and an even greater surprise awaited him. He had reached a spot within about a dozen yards of the hut, when he saw the door open slowly inward. The hut *was* inhabited. He had no idea what he expected to see emerge from the door, but it was certainly nothing in the world like what he did see.

Had the Grand Turk and the Great Khan strolled forth arm in arm he would not have been more surprised. His eyes opened wide with wonder, for, standing in the doorway of that forlorn and dilapidated hut, was the figure of a young woman.

WATERS came at once to a stop. The young woman on her part also remained still, and Waters saw by the look in her eyes that her astonishment was not less than his own. She stared at his face and then at his clothing. Her eyes then opened still wider, and she looked like a person who now saw clothing for the very first time.

For a few moments they stood facing each other without speaking. She was the first to break the silence.

"Who are you?" she said.

"My name is Waters," he replied. "A mariner I am. And English like you are yourself seemingly. But if I may be so bold as to ask, who might you be, and what are you doing on this island?"

"A castaway," she said. "I was cast ashore; I and a companion. Did you say an island?"

"An island without doubt."

"Oh—"

"And this companion of yours?"

He stepped up to her and examined her face more closely.

"Great Lord!" he cried before she could answer him. "Have I not seen you in London Town? I'll swear I have. I saw you in London not three months since. Your name is—"

"Josephine Brant."

"To be sure. And you sailed from London in the *Governor of the Indies*. I also was to have sailed in her, and but for a mischance I would have.

"You are David Waters? The passenger who failed to come on board at Deal?"

"The same."

"But how comes it you are here? You are not alone? Your ship—"

"Don't talk of that," he interrupted. "God forbid that you or I should ever see that ship again. An evil ship, and evil men aboard of her. How I came to be among 'em I'll tell you presently. But for the present we must lie well hidden. Maybe she'll sail in a few days, and then we must devise a means to get away from the island. But your com-

panion you were talking of just now—what of him?"

"For the moment I had forgotten him," she replied. "And there, too, is something to marvel at. When first I saw you I had taken you for him. For your likeness to him is extraordinary; your face, your size, your shape. Dressed alike, I could not have picked you out one from the other."

Waters looked at her narrowly. For a moment he was confounded. This resemblance of his to another—was he never to hear the last of it? Had he a double in every part of the world? Then all at once an idea struck him.

"This man you're talking of," he said, "where is he now?"

"I don't know. He went from here last evening to seek a shelter. He has not returned. I expected him back long since."

"Did he join the *Governor of the Indies* in London Town, or at Deal maybe?"

"At Deal he joined."

"Is he the man they call Agua Richards?"

"He is."

"Then I warn you beware of him. I know him to be a villain."

And then he told her of his own adventures since he left London right up to the time when he encountered her; of Nicholas Dench and his designs on his inheritance; of the other ruffians whom he had been forced to live with in the *Ten Commandments;* and of all he had learned from them concerning Agua Richards, for whom they had mistaken him.

She listened with great attention, and then in her turn she told him of her voyage in the *Governor of the Indies;* of the wreck; and how she and Richards alone of all the ship's company survived.

As Waters listened to her narrative he forgot all about the crew of the *Ten Commandments* and the dangers surrounding him. But as she finished he said suddenly:

"This fellow Richards—has he behaved ill toward you in any way here on this island? Mark you, in any way, I said. If he has, then God help him."

"He has not behaved ill," she replied.

Waters observed that she was reflecting, and he thought she had it in mind to say more. But she was silent, though he waited for her to speak.

"But say the word," he added. "If you have anything against him, tell me; and woe betide him when he returns."

She shook her head.

"No. I don't complain against him. I would not have you think that he behaved ill."

"But he's a villain nevertheless."

"In many respects he's a proper man," she replied. "I doubt not he's all you say. I may even say that I know him to have done very evil things. But nevertheless he's shown himself a proper man, Mr. Waters. Though maybe I should not, I can not help but admire him. And he has behaved truly well toward me since we landed here."

Waters discovered that his regard for Richards was not improved by this speech. He determined to keep his eye on the man whenever he appeared.

He fell to musing of Richards' presence on the island and the ruffians from whom he had escaped. Doubtless the latter would not depart and leave the two of them in peace for some time, at all events. They would probably search the island. These men and Richards were associates, and there were more unlikely things than that they would come together on the island before the ship departed. That would open up a dark prospect for himself, he reflected. Josephine Brant observed his pensive and troubled brow, and more or less she fathomed what was in his mind.

"Are you disturbed, Mr. Waters, about the dangers confronting us from the presence here of the evil men from the ship you spoke of just now?" she said. "Or are you thinking especially of Richards?"

"I was thinking of both," he replied.

"I see grave dangers to us from all of 'em."

He had scarcely spoken when they heard the sound of a faint halloo. It was answered almost immediately by another voice. Waters started up at once and seized Josephine by the wrist.

"We must go at once," he said urgently. "The pirates! They must not find us. This hut is too conspicuous. They can't help but see it if they approach."

She jumped to her feet. Waters had noted the direction from which the sounds had come. It was nearly opposite to that which he had followed when he discovered the hut.

"This way," he said as he made for the woods. "I know of a hiding place that is not easy for them to find. We shall be secure there for a time at least."

Quickly they made their way through the scrub, and very soon the woods closed around them. Waters found his way back without difficulty, but it soon appeared that they had not made their escape any too soon. They had not progressed far through the woods before a number of shouts and ejaculations behind them told that the hut had been discovered.

CHAPTER XIII

DOUBLOONS AND PIECES OF EIGHT

AGUA RICHARDS rose up from a mattress of coarse grass upon which he had been sleeping. He yawned and stretched his limbs in an endeavor to drive away the stiffness that his night's repose in the open had brought upon him. The heavy dew had saturated his clothing, and the dampness caused him to shiver. The air was rather cool as yet, for the sun had only just risen, and the entwinement of the palmetto leaves above his head made a canopy that the slanting rays of the sun could not penetrate.

He had awakened in rather a bad humor. His repose had not been easy, nor was his couch a comfortable one, but it was not on this account that he looked at his surroundings with such marked disfavor. He was by no means unused to discomfort, and the prospect of a succession of nights such as that which had just passed caused him not the least dismay. Moreover, he was too experienced an adventurer to be unable to find means eventually to improve the conditions of his repose.

Richards was one of those persons to whom purposeful activity was as the breath of life. To be forced to bear an aimless existence was for him a calamity. And such an existence he saw ahead of him for a very long time. The single glance that he had taken from the top of the tree on the evening before had been enough to assure him that the land on which fortune had cast him was an island, and a very small one too. The chance of escape from it for a very long time appeared remote. It was this prospect of a long period of enforced seclusion that had come to his mind the first thing on awakening and which had caused the furrows of discontent to appear on his brow.

But before long there came to him also the recollection of Josephine Brant, the girl he had saved from the wreck, and who seemed destined to become his sole companion in this abandoned spot. The recollection of her at once lent a brighter tone to his thoughts. It was characteristic of him that he gave no thought to the circumstance that she owed her life to his intervention and his aid.

Nor did it occur to him that she had so far made no reference to the great part he had played in saving her. If she was unaware of it, he was the last person to dream of acquainting her. He set no great value on his services. He had wished that she should be saved, and he had therefore set himself to accomplish the realization of his wish. Once the desired end was attained, the act of accomplishing it was forgotten.

His reflections regarding their compan-

ionship since they had come ashore indicated a larger egotism. Last night he had sworn not to molest the girl, and he had meant what he said. He had given her a loaded pistol for her protection against himself. For that he was inclined to plume himself unduly. He reflected that he had been unaccountably magnanimous. He marveled at his attitude, and he could not help wondering how long that attitude would last. It was contrary to the whole of his lifelong inclinations.

He turned in the direction of the hut and strode through the palmettos. He had gone no more than a score of paces when suddenly his foot kicked against a hard object that lay hidden in the tall grass and tangled creepers. It resisted the impact of his foot in a way that excited his curiosity. He stayed his course and bent downward, parting the creepers at the same time.

He could perceive that the object underneath was no hard stem or any part of the undergrowth. He pulled aside more of the creepers and then in the grass beneath him he saw, to his astonishment, the ribs of a skeleton. It was part of a human skeleton without a doubt. He gazed at it for a few moments, and then in a great haste he began to tear away the masses of tangled undergrowth.

In a short time the complete parts of the skeleton of a human body lay revealed. A few moldy shreds of clothing adhered to it. Judging by its size, the skeleton was almost certainly that of a man. One side of the skull above the temple was cloven across as though the head of the deceased person had been cut open with a very sharp and rather heavy instrument. After examining it Richards decided that the death of the man had been caused by that blow.

For some time he stood regarding the skeleton with wonder and curiosity. He placed his foot under the ribs and turned the mass partly over. A few small insects crawled away from underneath; and then his eye caught sight of a small disk lying partly embedded in the soil.

He picked it up. It was fairly heavy, and despite the particles of earth that still adhered to it, he could see at once that it was a coin. It was about the size of a two-shilling piece and, judging by its weight, he suspected it was of gold. He drew his knife and scraped off some of the soil with the blade. A yellow glint that showed almost at once proved that his estimate had been correct. He judged that it was a Spanish gold piece of existing currency.

With some eagerness he subjected the ground in the vicinity of the spot to a close scrutiny. But no other coins he found. A shoe buckle and a few brass buttons were all that rewarded his search. He stood upright once more and looked around him, half expecting that he might discover something that would offer an explanation for the presence of the skeleton. He walked slowly round the neighborhood of the spot, scraping with his feet the soil underneath in the hope that some further objects might be brought to light.

For a considerable time he moved in this way through the trees and undergrowth, occasionally plucking upward a bunch of shoots, or dragging aside some tendrils. He found nothing else, however, and, as the morning was now becoming rather far advanced, he decided to abandon his exploration for the present and return to the hut, which was no more than a couple of hundred yards or so distant.

HE WAS about to set forth in that direction when he was startled by hearing a voice quite close to him. It was a man's voice, and it was answered almost immediately by another. Then he heard some sounds that told him there were persons trying to force their way through the scrub and undergrowth near at hand. All at once he heard a man's voice say:

"May the devil in hell strike me low if I go a step farther! This thunder blasted island is naught but a Satan's patch of heat and thorns."

"Christians!" muttered Richards aloud.

Some one replied to the other man:

"Aye-aye, Tom Barry. So it is, my lad. But ye can pipe down and save your wind till we get to the top of that there mount. For to the top of it ye'll get right away, though there be heat and thorns, and the devil's claws thrown in."

Richards paused for a few seconds in amazement. There was something about the tone of the second voice that sounded highly familiar to him.

"Why, damme, that's Nick Dench," he muttered.

He turned to move in the direction of the sounds. The dark face of a tall rock partly barred his way. Its shape arrested his attention; it reminded him of a negro's countenance. There were the broad nose and thick lips, and there were two dents in the stone above them that could be taken for eyes. Richards went to pass round the obstruction. His eyes were not on the ground before him. They were turned, first to the curious rock, then to the tree stems ahead, where they searched for the men whose voices he had heard.

About a dozen paces he took and then, without any warning, the ground at his feet crumbled away and he found himself falling. He went downward for a distance of about five or six feet, and then landed on a hard surface. He looked around and discovered that he had fallen into a pit.

After he had shaken himself free from the earth that had fallen on him, he looked upward and saw that the mouth of the pit, which was about five feet across, was covered in part by creeper stems. He made a move to rise on to his feet. As he did so his hand came into contact with a hard substance on the floor of the pit. He touched it again, and his fingers closed on a hard, straight edge. It felt like metal, and he thought it must be the iron edge of a box or chest. Wondering, he knelt on the floor of the pit and began at once to scrape away the soil around the object. The soil was not very hard, and he had not much difficulty in uncovering the object sufficiently to determine its nature.

As he had supposed, it was a fairly large box, or chest, bound with iron. He tried to lift it away from its bed, but he found he could not. Either it was too heavy, or else it was too firmly embedded.

His curiosity was now thoroughly aroused, and he set himself systematically to unearth the chest. After awhile he uncovered it completely. It proved to be of prodigious weight, and although he used every ounce of his strength he found that he was unable to move it.

Filled with a strange excitement, he knelt down once more to examine the hole. He scooped away more of the soil from the edge, and then he discovered the rim of a second chest. By now his vision was becoming more accustomed to the half light, and he saw in one corner a third, and this one was entirely uncovered. He grasped it and found that it was not so heavy as the one he had discovered first of all.

In the dim light he examined it as well as he could. He found that he could lift one end without great difficulty. He could see that the lid of the box was loose. The iron bands had been broken through, but the lid was partially secured by a length of thin rope which was tied round the box. Quickly he drew his knife and cut the rope. He lifted the lid and groped inside. His hand encountered a heap of metal disks; coins they were; and weighty. They were golden coins, he had no doubt of it.

The box was no more than a quarter filled, but the coins were numerous. He shut the lid again and tested the weight of the box. It required nearly all his strength to lift it, but he resolved without more ado to hoist it to the ground

above, where he could examine its contents by the light of day. After a tremendous struggle he managed to raise it up the sides of the pit and thrust it over the edge. In a few seconds he had scrambled out after it. He was panting violently and bathed in sweat, but without waiting to regain his breath, he threw open the lid and gazed inside.

ANY one watching the face of Agua Richards at that moment would have seen a countenance on which was set an expression of the most intense greed. His eyes stared wide open at the contents of the box. He knelt beside it and thrust his hands inside. Then one hand he lifted slightly; the whiteness of his knuckles showed how tightly his fingers were clinched over the objects they held. The fingers loosened, and a small stream of golden pieces fell clinking into the box.

He had forgotten the voices he had heard not long before. He had forgotten Josephine Brant, the hut, the island on which he rested and the presence of other men upon it. His consciousness, like his countenance, was transformed. His mind held a vision of gold, unlimited gold.

But there were eyes watching him, though he knew it not. The men, whose approach he had forgotten, were near at hand. All at once he was startled by hearing a voice close to him.

"So that's why ye gave us the slip, eh, Mr. Agua Dick?' said the voice. "And maybe ye knew of this little hiding place all along, eh?"

Richards turned quickly and saw three men confronting him.

"Nick Dench!" he said.

"No other," replied the middle one of the three. "At your service, Mr. Agua Richards." And he took off his hat and bowed.

Richards stood upright and eyed the other man for a few seconds.

"However on earth did you manage to come to this place?" he said at last.

"A little bird told me ye were going to make a quiet little home on this island," replied Dench sarcastically. "So I thought I'd just step along and see how ye were getting on."

"You've got the *Ten Commandments* lying off the island?"

"Aye. She's still a-lying off the island just where ye left us. Just where ye left us without saying goodby."

"Left you just off this island without saying goodby? What in hell d'ye mean?"

"Oh, I mean nothing at all. It's just a polite way of saying how d'ye do."

Richards looked at him blankly. And then his face became dark with anger.

"I don't know what you're talking about," he said. "And as for leaving you here or anywhere else, I'd like you to tell me what the devil you and Peacock meant by sailing from Deal without me?"

It was Dench's turn to exhibit surprise.

"Left Deal without ye?" he said.

"Left without me," repeated Richards. "You both of you thought I was aboard when you sailed, eh? And Bale and Hoker as well. You sailed away and left us kicking up the shingle on Deal beach. What was the plot betwixt you and Peacock, Nick? And where is Peacock now?"

Dench did not reply. He looked at him for a considerable time with much perplexity. Then a light broke upon him. He gazed narrowly at Richards' countenance, and then at his tattered attire. He took a couple of steps forward.

"By the Lord, ye *are* Agua Dick!" he exclaimed.

Richards eyed him with lowered brow and made no reply.

Dench tapped him on the shoulder.

"I'm sorry, Dick," he said. " 'Twas all a mistake. I can soon let ye have the right of it. We've been harboring in the ship one whom we took to be ye; one who came aboard and passed himself off to me as your own self. No;

listen, man. What I'm telling ye is God's own truth. This man has the dead likeness of Agua Dick. He comes aboard right at the time when we're expecting Agua Dick. Not one of us but thinks he is Agua Dick and no one else. Not until a few days ago, when he skins out and leaves us without saying good-by. Isn't that so, Jacob?"

He appealed to one of the men who had accompanied him. The man nodded.

"Who is this man you're telling me of?" said Richards. "And where is he now?"

"We've yet to find him. He ran; two days ago. He's on the island somewhere. Who he is I'm not sure; though I've a shrewd idea by now. We'll find him, doubtless; and then ye'll see for yourself."

Richards pondered for a few moments on what he had heard. Then he said—

"If what you tell me is true, then you've told this man a whole lot that he shouldn't know."

"He knows everything," replied Dench. "But what does it matter now? He can't get away. And besides, if I'm not mistook, you've discovered what we came out here to get, eh?"

He glanced at the chest.

"How many of 'em in there?" he asked, pointing to the hole. "And who told ye their whereabouts?"

Richards turned to the opened chest, and once more his eyes brightened.

"I found 'em by accident," he said. "And not long since. The hole was well hidden. I found it by falling into it."

THE four men looked for some time with glistening eyes at the gold that lay revealed. Then Dench thrust his hand inside the box and drew forth a handful of gold coins.

"Doubloons," he said, and let them fall back into the box. He stood up.

"Packed full once, I don't doubt; but some one has had his fingers in before us. But there are more of 'em, didn't ye say? A few more like that, only packed full, and there's a big fortune for all of us."

Richards thrust his hands into the box and turned over the heap of coins. After awhile he drew forth a small roll of dirty and faded documents. The roll was tied round the middle with tarred spunyarn. Richards turned it over in his hand.

"What have ye there?" asked Dench.

"Papers," replied Richards. "Maybe they'll tell us how the gold came to be planted there; and maybe where there's more to be found."

He drew his knife and was about to cut through the spunyarn, when Dench touched him on the shoulder.

"Steady on, Dick," he said in a low whisper. "There may be something in them papers as concerns no one but you and me, the finders thereof, eh? Hold tight on to 'em for the present. We'll look through 'em by ourselves when we get on board."

"I guess you're right," said Richards. He thrust the roll into his shirt and then shut down the lid of the box.

"Let's see what else the hole contains," he said.

He moved toward the pit mouth. The two sailors of Dench's crew were already stooping over it and peering inside. At that moment two more men broke through the scrub and approached the group. Their eyes opened wide with wonder as they saw the opened box. One of the men went up to Dench.

"Say, Cap'n," he said excitedly, "there's a small house yonder on the side of the hill. We went inside of it. It's empty; and no one seems to have lived in it for long since."

"Eh?" Richards interrupted. "No one in it, did you say?"

"Not a soul," replied the man.

"Why of course not," shouted Richards angrily. "Because, you blasted fools, you've scared her away. Bawling and screaming, I doubt not. And now she's a-hiding in these infernal woods and dare not show herself. You clumsy

swine! For the worth of a couple of pins I'd knock your empty heads together."

"Ease up a bit, Dick," Dench interrupted. "Who is this 'she' ye're telling about?"

"A maid I brought ashore here," replied Richards. "I brought her ashore from the ship as I worked my passage aboard of. She who was the passenger in the *Delaware* when we took her, you remember. A-going back to America she was; and I aboard the same ship, as I said. But wrecked we were against the island the day before yesterday, and we two only were saved."

"This maid, Brant's her name?" said Dench. "She who testified against ye in the court of law?"

"The same," replied Richards.

"She came near causing ye to hang."

"I bear her no ill will."

Dench smiled.

"Surely not," he said. "We'll find her right enough, Dick. We'll scour the woods as soon as we've dug up the whole of this gold. And then ye can take her aboard, and ye can have the main cabin all to yourselves. And when you're tired of her, maybe I, Nick Dench—"

Richards interrupted him fiercely.

"Look you here, Nick Dench. You mistake mightily if you think that I, or you, or any other of your dirty swine are going to treat her other than as the lady she would be treated among her own folk. D'ye hear? No man'll treat her otherwise, whosoever he be."

"That's all right, Dick," said Dench. "Treat her as ye wish. I care naught what ye do with her. And now regarding these boxes, how many did ye say there were in that hole?"

"I don't know. I think there might be many more. I think it's certain there must be many more."

"Then I reckon as we'll have 'em out with no delay. And get 'em aboard we will this very day."

Not less than a score of boxes they found altogether. They were of varying sizes and all but one were securely fastened. They were weighty, so that it took several men to hoist each one. Dench had the fastenings broken off them all, and the men explored the contents.

There was that to make their eyes glisten; ingots of gold and silver bound with jute sacking, and many thousands of Spanish golden and silver coins; large gold doubloons and silver pesos duros. Pieces of eight, the sailors called the latter, from the curious sign stamped on each one resembling the figure eight; a sign which some say was that adopted afterward by the North American settlers for the sign to represent their dollar coin.

The men danced and sang and whistled. They shook hands with each other. They exhibited toward each other every sign of friendliness and brotherliness. They hurried to the ship and returned with ropes and handspikes. Cheerfully they sweated in the great heat, binding up the chests with rope and hauling them eagerly, despite their extreme heaviness, through the woods and over the rough country to the anchorage. They laughed and jested one to another during the journey. They contested with each other for the privilege of carrying these massive prizes, and seemed each one, as he strove and sweated, to be already enjoying the riches that fortune had found for him.

Before they left the spot where they had found the gold, Dench drew Richards on one side.

"Now it behooves us to watch with mighty care what the hands'll be up to henceforth," he said. "We don't trust 'em, you and I. And, anyhow, they stand to get mighty little out of all this. But we'll need 'em till we can bring it all to a safe anchorage. We'll need to keep a tight hold on the men. They'll be dangerous 'fore long, or I'm much mistook."

"What about Peacock?" asked Richards.

"Peacock's dead," replied Dench shortly. "The hands elected me cap'n

in his place."

Richards' brow became dark again. A suspicion of treachery on the part of Dench flashed once more across his mind. With Peacock dead and himself out of the way, there had been a clear course apparently for Dench to work single handed. Was it improbable that he had plotted to gain possession of Sennett's treasure exclusively for himself? Richards did not wholly trust Nicholas Dench.

"We must find this man you spoke of, who you say resembles myself," he said. "I want to see him with my own eyes."

"See him you shall, Dick. He can't escape us for long. The island is no size to speak of. We'll drag it with a net."

Richards nodded, but made no reply, and the pair strolled back to where the crowd of delighted sailors were shouting and sweating at their labor of removing the treasure from its hiding place to the ship.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TREACHERY OF NICHOLAS DENCH

"WE'RE getting under way."

"Getting under way? Why? When?"

"Now. This afternoon."

Richards' face flushed, and he took a step forward.

"No, no, Nick. You can't think of it. We can't leave just yet."

"Why not? What in hell is there to stop us? We've got the gold aboard, every bit of it. We've scraped the hole clean. There's not a —"

"No, no," interrupted Richards. "You can't leave yet. Those two people ashore—we've got to find 'em."

"They can have the empty hole. They can have the whole blessed island to 'emselves. And that likeness of yours, your Holy Ghost or whatever he may be, I'll let him go, and my blessing to boot. No one shall say Nick Dench was vindictive in the hour of his good fortune. They can go, the pair of 'em. They can marry each other and live in a Garden of Eden."

Richards turned pale for a few moments; then his face went a darker hue.

"The maiden you're talking of," he said, "I don't mean to leave her behind. The man can rot here till the Day of Judgment for what I care. But I'm not leaving without the maiden."

Dench shrugged his shoulders and turned to move away.

"We're getting under way this afternoon, Agua, and ye can set your mind to that notion. If ye don't mean to leave without the wench, well then you can stay ashore with her. That's as ye please. But I'm not delaying the ship an hour, and that's final."

"Listen, Nick," said Richards. "Let me have the hands ashore for half a day and we'll find 'em. The island ain't so big. We'll smoke 'em out in half a day."

"Not half an hour," replied Dench decisively. "Not half a minute. I won't wait longer than I can help. For why? The crew's nearly out of hand already. The gold's upset 'em proper. They're howling already like the pack of dogs they are. They want a share out, and they don't look like waiting much longer. It'll be as much as I can do to get 'em to wait till I can navigate 'em to a civilized harbor. If I stay any longer, we won't get 'em to work the ship at all, and the devil knows what'll happen then. No; we're off now, I tell ye."

He turned round and waved his arm to Willetts, who was leaning over the side of the ship and dividing his attention between themselves and the shore. The mate drew himself up and came toward them. Dench was about to give him an order, when Richards grasped his wrist roughly.

"Listen to me, Nick," he said in a low and husky voice. "You're not leaving the anchorage until I find that girl ashore and bring her aboard."

For answer Dench snatched his wrist away.

"Pipe the hands to weigh anchor and make sail," he said to Willetts.

The mate walked a few paces forward and placed a small whistle to his lips. But before he could sound a note Richards moved hastily up to him and grasped him by the shoulder.

"Hold your wind," he shouted. "And listen to me. From now on you'll take your orders from me. From me and no one else; d'ye hear?"

"Eh?" said Dench. "You? What in hell are ye saying? Have ye lost your wits?"

Richards lowered his voice slightly, but his tones were determined enough as he replied:

"I said he's taking his orders from me from now on. Me and no one else. Him and every mother's son in this ship also. They'll do as I tell 'em henceforth."

"Why, damme, it's mutiny ye're talking," said Dench angrily.

"Call it what you like," shouted Richards, not less angrily. "You said just now you couldn't get the hands to do as you told 'em. Well, we'll see if they'll do as I tell 'em. I'm cap'n from now on, Nick Dench, and you'll do as I tell you with the rest of 'em."

Dench's expression of amazed annoyance changed suddenly to one of smooth placidity. His lips parted in a smile.

"See here, Dick," he said in a tone that sounded affable. "What it is that's bitten ye this afternoon I won't try to fathom. I won't say it's the gold. Maybe it's this wench that's got ye by the tiller and seems to be shaping your course for ye. It doesn't matter anyway. But what I want to say to ye is this:

"Do we want to quarrel over a mite as don't really matter one way or t'other? Ye're going to be cap'n says ye. Do I mind? If so be as it gets us where we both wants to go, you can set your mind to it that I don't care a Dutch stiver who's cap'n. Now what's the disagreement betwixt you and me? I wants to get this heap of gold to a place of safety before we lose it, having regard to the hands as ain't what ye might call amenable. Do ye disagree with that?"

Agua answered—

"I don't disagree with it, but—"

Dench interrupted—

"Ye don't disagree. Of course ye don't. But ye wants us to stand by till ye find this wench and bring her away. Do I object to that? Ye may say as I don't, Dick. I don't mind in the least if all the while it can be secured as the hands don't rise and take the ship and the gold away from us, and slit our gizzards into the bargain. Now listen, Dick, to what I got to propose. Ye can take six hands ashore in the galley here and now; if so be, mind ye, as you can get six hands to go with you. We'll call 'em aft and ye can ask 'em. Then I'll undertake to stand by and keep the ship at anchor until this time tomorrow. How does that suit ye?"

Richards pondered for a few moments. As a reply to what he had demanded the offer sounded fair on the face of it. But he put no trust in the good faith of Nicholas Dench. Once he was away from the ship, what was there to prevent Dench from putting to sea and leaving him on the island? And as for the six men also with him, Dench would not mind leaving them behind either. There would be so many less to share in the hoard.

Richards shook his head decisively and said:

"No, no, Nick. It don't suit at all. If we don't leave until this time tomorrow there will be time enough for me, I don't doubt. But I want the whole of the crew to help in the search, except maybe a few left aboard who can't give us the slip."

Dench laughed softly.

"Ye think ye'll get all the crew ashore?" he said.

"I count on that."

Dench shrugged and said:

"Well, try it. Fetch the hands aft, and tell 'em what ye propose."

THERE was a note of eagerness in the voice of Nicholas Dench as he spoke. His face lost its suave expression. There was a strained look in his eyes. Richards was too much engrossed in his purpose to notice it. He turned round to face Willetts, who was still standing close by. Before he could speak, however, Dench whipped a knife from his belt and launched himself at his back.

Well it was for Richards that the lowering sun was directly behind him at that moment, for the sudden apparition of a lengthening shadow on the deck before him warned him of that dangerous approach. An instinctive distrust of Dench impelled him to turn his head. He saw the raised knife just in time. With a presence of mind that served him instantaneously, he shot up his hand and grasped the wrist as it was descending.

"You black hearted villain!" he exclaimed.

And then his face became dark with a passionate hatred. Exercising all his strength, he twisted back the forearm of the other man until he screamed with agony. The knife dropped from his nerveless fingers, and he sank almost on to his knees. Richards relaxed his grip when the arm he held was on the point of breaking.

"You traitorous hound!" he shouted. "What d'ye mean by trying to murder me?"

"Blast ye!"

Dench's left hand went to the butt of a pistol which was stuck in his belt. Richards observed his design before its purpose was accomplished. His right hand grasped the handle of a knife which he carried in a sheath at his side. Dench pulled forth the pistol and fired, but before the bullet had left the barrel the point of his opponent's knife was driven with great force through his neck and out at the other side. The bullet went wide of its mark. Dench sank to the deck and lay there in a widening pool of blood.

Richards stood regarding his fallen enemy for awhile. Then he turned round and confronted a quickly gathering crowd of the men. Disturbed by the noise of the scuffle, they had hurried to the spot. Nearly the whole of the crew had gathered around. Their faces portrayed amazement rather than resentment. Richards decided to lose no time in impressing on them his authority.

"My lads," he said, "those of you who were here on deck will know without my telling 'em that this man here, who I've just killed, did try to murder me, though I provoked him not by any act of mine. He tried to stab me in the back. I stayed him; and then he pointed at me a pistol. I've killed him, though he was captain of the ship; just as I'd kill any other man who tried to serve me likewise. I know not what his idea may have been in trying to make away with me, except that maybe my death would have made one the less to share in the gold.

"He's dead now, as you can see, and as I'm the only man aboard as can navigate the ship, I judge you won't deny me the right to be captain in his stead. Nick Dench has proved himself a black hearted traitor. You'll now stand by me, I reckon, and obey my orders, and I on my part swear I'll take not a mite for myself as rightly belongs to you. That's all I've got to say, my lads. Now two of you take that carcass and heave it overboard, and swab up that mess."

He singled out two of the men, and they, without more ado, took hold of the body of Dench and thrust it over the bulwark. It fell into the sea with a splash. Not one of the men troubled even to look over the side. The death of their late captain appeared to move them not at all. They displayed neither sorrow for him nor resentment against his slayer. They accepted the substitution of Richards in his place without any sign of demur.

They dispersed and went each about his affairs, which consisted in the main

of sleeping and card playing. A dispute, a fight, a man's life ended; a mere episode in their day's existence was concluded.

Despite the calm acquiescence of the crew in his elevation to the command, Richards deemed it unwise to embark at once on his comprehensive search of the island. The hands had labored hard in bringing the treasure to the ship, and it would be somewhat of a strain on his authority to order them ashore again so soon. Moreover, the day was now well advanced, and by the time the men could reach the shore it would be quite dark. He reluctantly resolved to defer his search until the following morning.

He could not help but perceive that all that Dench had told him about the state of the crew was true. The discovery of the gold had destroyed what little cohesion and discipline they had ever possessed. Their thoughts were wholly on the riches that they considered were now theirs. Richards himself had already heard murmurs arising from them, implying a desire for an immediate sharing of the money. It would not be long before these murmurs shaped themselves into a public and insistent demand.

In anticipation of receiving that which they estimated was coming to them, the men had already begun to gamble on a large scale among themselves. In groups of three or four they sat or lounged on the upper deck under an awning improvised from a spare mainsail, their faces intent on the cards in their hands, and making from time to time chalk marks on the deck to indicate their winnings. Disputes were frequent among them; fierce disputes they were, like those of starving wolves with a meal between them.

And there were bloody episodes; knives were frequently drawn and sometimes used. One man had been killed already. Another lay below deck, an unconscious body from which life was fast ebbing. Two more were sorely hurt and moaning continually. In a state of high fever they mumbled about gold, and sometimes they screamed for the the blood of a shipmate.

Richards spent the short remainder of the afternoon pacing slowly up and down the poop, stopping occasionally to gaze at the shore. His impatience to find the fugitives had not been lessened by the tragic events of the afternoon. It disclosed itself in his restless movements; even while he stood by the ship's side with his eyes on the shore, his fingers beat a nervous tattoo on the rail over which he was leaning, while his teeth frequently bit into his lower lip.

CHAPTER XV

DAVID WATERS MEETS HIS DOUBLE

THE dawn had already broken when Waters awoke on the morning following his flight with Josephine from the hut. His companion was already astir. In the small cavern that he had previously made his resting place, she had slept soundly. Lying in the open near at hand, he enjoyed a less easy repose.

The coolness of the early morning made their retreat a pleasant one, and for the time being they both forgot the dangers of their situation. For his own part he could almost have wished that his stay with her in that spot could have been prolonged indefinitely. As for Josephine, he could not help noticing that she developed a bright frame of mind that merged at times into gaiety. Throughout their flight and their concealment she had shown a calmness and a courage that impressed him and filled him with admiration. And now as they sat together eating plantains and wild oranges, she seemed as though she had no cares and that the morrow held for her a sure salvation from her difficulties.

"This hiding place of yours," she said to him, "it's not disagreeable. There are many places that I would choose less to abide in."

"It's agreeable enough, as you've said; but it's too near the anchorage for my liking," Waters said.

"Where then can we go? Is the island large?"

"Too small for us, I'm afraid. But see that bare hill yonder? I was about to climb it yesterday when I found you. I'll go to the top at once and spy out the land. Doubtless I'll find a way to suit us."

He left her and made his way through the entanglement to the foot of the hill. He had gone but a comparatively short distance when he heard something that brought him up abruptly. It was a woman's scream. It was Josephine without a doubt.

He broke back through the undergrowth, and there he saw Josephine struggling in the grasp of two of the men from the brigantine. In three bounds he was upon them. He dealt one of them—a stringy ruffian whom he knew by the name of Banks—such a clump on the side of the jaw that he went over like a ninepin and did not rise till long afterward.

The other man let go at once his hold on Josephine and turned to run. Waters recognized him also; it was the parson, Isaiah Gilman. Waters saw red at that moment, and the death of the man would hardly have satisfied his rage. Gilman took one look at his face and then turned round and scurried off, squealing like a cornered rat. Waters caught him in a couple of strides and lifted him off his feet and shook him. In all probability Waters would have crushed the life out of him, but at that moment he heard something crashing through the bushes, and then a couple of strong arms grasped him round the middle. At the same time he felt the cold muzzle of a pistol pressed against his right temple, and a harsh voice growled in his ear—

"Let go, you swine, or I'll scatter your brains."

He felt a rope being passed around him. In a trice his arms were pinioned so that he could not move them an inch. He turned his head and saw that two men had hold of him. A third stood a little distance away; the lower half of him was partly hidden by the bushes. Waters saw his head and shoulders quite plainly, however. His forehead was encircled by a brightly colored kerchief, and over it he wore a three-cornered hat of good make and quality.

Waters knew him at once. He knew it was he they called Agua Richards; the man for whom he had been mistaken all the while he was in the brigantine. Richards held a pistol in his right hand and was fingering the barrel with the other. He looked hard at Waters for a number of seconds. There was wonder in his eyes. Josephine was standing not far from him. She was held in the grasp of two more of his ruffians. Richards turned his eyes from Waters and signaled the men by an abrupt gesture to release their hold on her. They did so at once. He then strode up to Waters.

"So this is the fellow," he said in an insulting tone. "Truth, he's like me, I guess. Nick Dench had reason to be deceived."

He placed his hand under Waters' jaw and roughly thrust his head backward. The gesture had the effect of exasperating Waters. His face turned pale with anger.

"Like you, am I?" he said contemptuously. "Then I pray God it is in countenance only. For I count it my greatest misfortune that I should resemble a foul hearted villain."

"You traitorous dog!" Richards shouted in a passion. "You dare talk to me! Then I counsel you to clap a stopper on your tongue, or I'll have it torn from your throat."

He struck him a violent blow on the mouth with his fist.

"Take that and be civil henceforth, or the yardarm that's waiting for you will be changed to something you won't care to look on."

And then Waters' indignation boiled over.

"You foul blackguard!" he shouted. "You no-nation swab! Like me, are you? Then maybe through that same likeness folks have mistaken you for a seaman—God help 'em!"

The insult went home completely. Richards' face became transfixed with passion. He raised his pistol and cocked it. Waters shut his eyes, for he had no doubt that his last moment had come. But the explosion he expected to hear never came. Instead he heard a muffled exclamation in a voice that he recognized as Josephine's. There was the noise of a scuffle. He opened his eyes. Josephine was holding the arm of Richards in a tight and determined grip. The strength that she exhibited was such that Richards was borne backward. On her face was a look of fierce determination.

Richards strove to withdraw his arm, but he could not. His two ruffians now rushed forward, and together they succeeded in tearing her away, but not before one of them had received a clout on the face that made him stagger. They were using her very roughly. Waters struggled violently to get free, but he could do nothing to help her; his bonds held him secure. He perceived, however, that Richards, on recovering himself, roughly bade his men release her.

What happened after that he had no idea, for one of the men who had hold of him, irritated no doubt by a kick that Waters had given him in the course of his struggles, put an end to his part in the affair by striking him on the temple with the butt end of a pistol.

IN THE main cabin of the brigantine Josephine and Richards sat facing each other on opposite sides of a small polished table. Josephine's appearance was calm, and she preserved a manner that was seemingly amicable. Richards was not wholly at his ease. He seemed unable to remain still. More than once he rose to his feet and went to the stern windows, returning to his seat after a few seconds spent in gazing out at the water.

"What is your special concern for this fellow?" he said abruptly after one of these spasmodic movements.

Josephine did not reply.

"You never saw him before you came to this island?"

"I never did."

"You didn't know he came aboard this ship and passed himself off as myself; acted spy on the doings of the crew, and purposed throughout to play the part of a traitorous dog?"

"I know he did nothing of the sort. He found himself on board this ship through a misadventure. He purposed to do nothing but escape from it as soon as he could. That much he did and nothing else."

"Bah! He told you that. Did he tell you he informed 'em he was David Waters, or Agua Richards? Did he listen to all their designs, or did he stop his ears?"

"He did no more than he was made to do by circumstance. If I were in his place, I would have done the same."

"The devil you would!"

"I hold him blameless."

"Blameless! The dog has crossed me at every turn with his infernal interference. But every dog has his day. He's had his. And now the hands aboard this ship have theirs."

"What have you done with him?" There was a trace of anxiety in her voice that she could not wholly conceal.

Richards looked away from her and his glance was hard.

"In the forepeak he lies. He's now the concern of the crew. They'll deal with him tomorrow."

"What will they do with him?"

Richards laughed, and then shrugged his shoulders.

"They'll do with him as they please. David Waters is wholly their affair. They'll be not gentle with a traitor, you may suppose. Doubtless he'll end at the yardarm. They mean to keelhaul him to begin with."

"That means they'll drag him under the bottom of the ship with ropes?"

Richards nodded.

"You could stay them if you wished."

"I couldn't. No one could."

"I thought you were captain of this ship!" There was a faint note of contempt in her voice.

"No one could stop 'em, I tell you. And if I could, I wouldn't."

They spoke no more to each other for a time. Richards sat in a posture of brooding meditation, while at the same time he drummed his fist on the table. After a time he rose from his seat and went to a cupboard in the side of the cabin. On a shelf was the roll of papers that he had brought from the island and also a small canvas bag tied at the neck. He took out the bag and regarded it contemplatively for awhile. Then he returned with it to the table. He untied the string and tipped the bag upside down. A stream of large golden coins fell on the polished board. He looked up and set his eyes on the face of Josephine.

"Spanish doubloons," he said.

She looked at the small heap of coins and said nothing.

"Doubloons," he repeated. "Each one of 'em worth more than thirty shillings of good English money."

His eyes shone with a bright light, and there was a quality of fierce animation in his speech.

"The hold is stuffed with 'em. Hundreds of thousands of 'em."

"You say nothing," he said to her after a pause. "But you know full well what all this means. Riches and ease for the rest of my life. Anything I desire. Everything . . ."

His eyes were on her. He was regarding her with a concentrated glance.

"And you—you can share it if you wish. Just think: everything you desire; fine clothes, horses, a mansion—two, as many of 'em as you like. Everything you like. Eh?"

"I want none of it," Josephine replied, a little alarmed at his vehement manner.

"No; see here," he said insistently. "Riches ain't everything, I'll allow; not even enormous riches like we have here. But it's a great deal. Think what you could do. You could make charitable gifts to poor and needy folk. You'd like to do that, eh? And me—I'd help you. Before God, I swear I'd do all you wish. I'll give up this life and lead a good life ashore; a respectable life. That's what I've wanted all along. But luck has never come my way till now. I'll be a power in the land, and you as my wife will a be a great lady. Say, will you?"

She shook her head.

"No," she replied decisively. "Impossible. I couldn't think of it."

"Listen to me. You don't know me; you don't. You know me only as a poor seafaring rat as has spent nearly all his life hunted by the King's men and shunned by all decent folk. But I'm not like that. Only give me a chance and I'll let you see. I'll be to you more than you can ever dream of."

She shook her head again and looked away from him.

"Listen," he said. "I've told you about all this money and what I think of it. Now I really care naught for it. I only want to do your wishes. Whatever you want, that I'll always do down to the smallest mite."

"You mean you would do anything I ask?" she said slowly.

He looked at her a little surprised.

"Of course I mean that."

She stretched her arm in the direction of the shore.

"Then send David Waters ashore free and unharmed—now. Do that for me. Nothing more I ask, but that I wish with all my soul."

AS SOON as she had spoken she regretted she had said so much. She saw at once the effect on him of her demand. A lowering frown settled on his brow. As he looked at her there was an angry light in his eyes. His face became flushed.

"You're in love with the hound," he shouted angrily. "You—"

"I— How dare you!"

"You are. Don't lie."

Richards walked to the stern windows and then back again.

"No!" he shouted at last. "Whatever you decide to do, that will never happen. And take heed. Before this time tomorrow, David Waters will be food for the sharks."

She rose to her feet and in a voice of fierce determination she answered him:

"Hear me, Mr. Richards. If you kill that man you may kill me also, for I tell you here and now that if you harm him I'll never forgive you. Never, never. Allow him to go free with sufficient food and whatever else he needs to make his escape, and you will earn my gratitude forever. You can do that much. Do it then for me."

Richards stood confronting her. His anger was not lessened by her speech. His manner was violent and his gestures threatening. His eyes blazed.

"I'll not do that," he shouted. "Never. I know now why you want him freed. But he won't be. The crew will settle with him tomorrow. And—blast him!"

He flung open the door and strode from the cabin.

Richards mounted on to the poop and walked to the stern. He stood there for a long time with his arms resting on the rail, while he gazed at the water below. The sun was setting, and a cool breeze from the shore fanned his hot and fevered forehead. The water gurgled under the counter, and the sound soothed his restless spirit. The crew were all below deck, but occasionally the voice of one of them reached him—a muffled oath, a malediction or a burst of reckless laughter.

He watched the sun disappear. The twilight came and went; the darkness settled down; and still he stood there leaning over the rail. After awhile he turned away and entered the main cabin. He lighted the lamp. On the table he saw the small heap of gold just as he had left it. He sat down and planted his elbows on the table, resting his head on his hands. He remained in that attitude for a considerable time. Then he gathered up the coins and replaced them in the bag.

He arose and went to the cupboard, replacing the bag on the shelf. As he did so his hand touched the roll of papers. Mechanically he drew it forth. No one had touched it since it had been placed there. No one, apparently, had examined the papers since they had been taken from their hiding place on the island, for the tarred spunyarn with which they were bound had bitten deeply into them, while the knot had obviously not been tampered with.

For a few moments Richards regarded the roll with faint interest. He made a move to restore it to the shelf. Suddenly he altered his mind. He drew his knife and cut the spunyarn. Unrolling the papers, he glanced at the top one. After reading a few words he returned to the table, sat down and spread out the papers before him.

As he read them through the expression on his face gave indication of his growing interest. His brow contracted. He read on and on, turning over the sheets one by one and pausing never once in their perusal. When he had reached the end, he turned back and read certain portions over again. Finally he took his eyes off the documents and, leaning back in his chair, gazed reflectively at the cabin bulkhead opposite.

"Henrietta Waters!" he murmured aloud. "And dead these many years. God! I never knew."

For long he sat there without moving. His face became clouded. There was trouble in his mind. He leaned over the table with his arm resting on it. His head sank on his arm.

An hour passed by. The night was well advanced when he rose from his seat and went once more to the cupboard. He took out a sheet of paper, a quill and a jar of ink. He sat at the table and wrote for some time. Then

he placed the sheet with the roll and tied them up together. He thrust the packet into his pocket and walked out of the cabin.

CHAPTER XVI

THE VOYAGE OF THE GALLEY

WATERS awoke to find himself in a dark and ill-smelling hole. He was tied securely so that he could not move a limb. He was sorely cramped and stiff through his bonds, and his head ached a great deal. For a long time he could not remember anything that had happened. And then he recalled his capture by Agua Richards and his band of marauders, and the blow on the head he had got from one of them, the last thing he knew.

He wondered what they had done with Josephine, and a wave of fear swept over him as he imagined her a prisoner in that vile company. Finally he fell to wondering in what dark hole they had placed him. As his senses became clearer he became aware of a faint noise of slopping water that came from above. He judged then that he was in the brigantine, somewhere below the waterline, either the hold or the forepeak. But it was very dark, and he could see nothing.

He had a dreadful thirst, and he would have given all his chances of life for one long drink of cool water.

For how long he remained in this situation he could not tell. But after lying there conscious for about half an hour, he heard the slight noise of a tread on the planking above. All at once a small hatch was removed quietly and a ray of light penetrated the gloom from above. He looked up and saw a ladder and the feet of some one descending. The person carried a lantern. He came down quickly but silently and stood before him. It was Agua Richards.

Waters faced him with not a little wonder. Neither spoke for a time. Richards was regarding him also. To his great alarm Waters saw him draw a knife from a sheath at his belt.

He shut his eyes and gritted his teeth with the horrid expectancy of feeling the edge of the knife against his throat. But nothing of the sort happened. Of a sudden he felt the cords that bound his arms released. Richards had cut them through with his knife. In a few seconds Waters was free to move. But all that he could do for awhile was to lie flat and endeavor to stretch his limbs, so painfully cramped were they. He could see by the light of the lantern that Richards was still regarding him; he could gather nothing, however, from his looks, of what the man intended to do.

At length Richards leaned over him and helped him to raise himself. It was then that he spoke for the first time.

"See here, David Waters," he said. His voice was low and sounded not unfriendly. "You are free to depart. I leave you unharmed; but pay careful heed to what I say."

He then spoke hurriedly, as one to whom time was very short.

"Once long ago in London Town I tried to take your life, and, while not succeeding, I yet did you sore hurt, for which may God forgive me. I try to make amends here and now. Listen carefully to what I say, and depart not in the smallest particular from the advice I now give you. Your life and that of one for whom we would both give much, I fancy, hangs upon it. Josephine Brant is in her cabin now, the one on the larboard side. Take her with you and get into the galley; it's alongside below the gangway. Get away in the boat as quickly as you can. There is food and water in it to last you a month; also mast and sail, and two pair of oars. With luck you should reach Jamaica in eight or ten days. When your safety is assured, but not before, read what I give you here."

He then thrust into his hands a roll of papers tied with spunyarn.

"Be careful as you go not to disturb

the hands. Every man jack of 'em is now drunk and snoring. So no one should interfere. But mark what I say. Lose no time in getting away from the ship. Your lives depend upon it. Go softly and wake not the hands. They bear you no good will. Here is a loaded pistol and a knife. If any one tries to stay you, don't hesitate to kill. And now goodby and good luck."

He grasped Waters by the hand and helped him to climb the ladder.

"Try and bear me no ill will henceforth," he added as Waters passed through the hatchway.

IT WAS in somewhat of a daze that Waters made his way out of the forepeak. He remembered afterward a last glimpse that he caught of Richards as he stood down there with his arms folded and his head bent. Vaguely he felt that Richards was making a sacrifice on his behalf and that of the woman with whom he had been taken prisoner.

Little did he know then either the extent of the sacrifice or the reason that ordained it. Had he known, it is doubtful whether even the safety of Josephine Brant would have induced him to depart and leave his enemy there in the dark forepeak.

Waters mounted uneasily to the forecastle. It was dark and there was no moon. A single lantern hung from the main starboard shrouds and gave a faint light in the waist of the ship. Avoiding the rays as best he could, he made his way aft to the main cabin. The cabin of Josephine opened out of it. He went to the door and knocked boldly. There was no answer. He knocked again without result; and then tried the handle. The door was locked.

"Josephine," he cried in a low voice. "Open the door. 'Tis I, David Waters. Come, open the door. We're free."

The door was opened, and to his relief Josephine stood before him. Her face showed traces of trouble and suffering, but he had no time to spare in consoling her. He bade her go with him at once. Softly they made their way outside and reached the gangway. They were not disturbed, and no one in the ship gave any sign of wakefulness. The boat was made fast beneath the gangway, as Richards had promised. They climbed down into her; Waters cut the painter to save all delay, and it was not long before they were well away from the ship.

Steadily he rowed through the darkness, taking care to make as little sound as possible, and shaping a course roughly parallel with the shore in a southerly direction. Neither spoke a word to each other. Waters watched the light hanging from the shrouds of the brigantine grow smaller and fainter as they drew farther away.

Not a sound came from the ship. The light grew smaller and smaller. Waters could not take his eyes away from it. More than once as he rowed, it seemed to grow larger and brighter; but that was only his fancy, or else a trick of his eyesight. Unquestionably the light was growing smaller. It was a pinpoint glistening over the dark waters.

Then all at once the light was blotted out. But in its place there arose a bright red glare. It shot upward toward the sky, lighting up reflections both in the black sky above and on the sea beneath. A second or two later there came a mighty roar. A number of flaming brands, fragments of spars and cordage, fell into the sea with a hiss that they could plainly hear despite the distance they were from them. And then the red glare, the flames and the sparks disappeared, and the darkness settled down once more.

Waters had ceased rowing the moment the red glare appeared. For several minutes he rested on the looms of his oars. Stupefaction made him incapable of either thought or action. Then as the realization of the tragedy dawned on him, he dropped the oars and placed his head in his hands.

He forgot all about the evil crew, who

had thus at one fell blow gone to their doom. He took no account of the justice of the retribution that had overtaken them. He regarded not the fact than an evil ship had ceased forever to be a menace to the lives of honest seafarers. In that woeful minute he saw none of these things. He saw only the sturdy figure of a man standing with feet apart in a poise of meditation in the dark hole of the forepeak; he who had delivered them from the catastrophe which he had planned and in which he had perished.

It was Josephine who first broke the silence. On hearing the explosion she had grasped the gunwale of the boat in fear. She had gazed backward toward the spot where the ship had lain, and in the last reflection of the fading glare Waters had caught a glimpse of her terror stricken countenance. There was a tremor in her voice as she spoke.

"That explosion," she said. "It means that all of them are killed?"

"All of them without doubt," he replied.

She was silent for a space, but he knew of what she was thinking.

"Richards was on board?"

He nodded.

"Unhappily he was."

"You saw him before you came to me?"

"I did. It was he who set me free. It was he who arranged beforehand for our deliverance." And then he added after a pause, "It was he also, I doubt not, who fired the magazine and brought them all to their end."

"And himself with them?"

"I have no doubt of it."

She spoke no more. Waters took the oars again and rowed toward the shore. They landed on the beach, and she helped him to haul the boat beyond the reach of the waves. He took out the sail and carried it to the edge of the wood. He spread it out and made it fast to two trees in such a manner that it would serve as a shelter for the night. In this shelter he invited her to rest. She complied at once, and he sat down beside her.

For a long time neither of them said a word. It was she who first spoke.

"Though he did some bad things in the course of his life, he was not wholly compounded of ill," she said. She was still thinking only of the man who had died in delivering them. "I could recount some fine things he has done that you would know nothing of."

"'Twas a great and noble act that brought him to his end," Waters said.

She made no reply. Nor did she speak again, but lay down with her head pillowed on her elbow. He lay down also. For a long time he lay awake. After a time he heard her sobbing. More than once he spoke to her, but she did not answer, and eventually he dozed off to sleep.

AT DAYBREAK they arose, and almost immediately they put to sea. Waters set the sail and shaped a course for a large gap in the reef that he had observed from a low hill near the shore. They passed it safely and the small craft was soon dancing over the blue waves beyond. Aided by a fresh breeze, they made good progress out to sea, and soon they left that island of wonderful and tragic memories far astern.

Waters had determined to make for Jamaica, or one of the other large islands of the Greater Antilles. He had a compass but no chart, nor did he know with any degree of exactitude the bearings of the island they had just left. He knew its general situation, enough to enable him to shape the general course he wished, and he judged that, wind and weather permitting, he could hardly fail to miss some part of one of the larger islands for which he was aiming.

The wind held fair all day, but dropped at nightfall. He took in the sail and put out a sea anchor, and they slept throughout the night. Soon after daybreak he set the sail again, a light breeze having sprung up. Throughout that day and the one that followed they

made fair progress. Meanwhile, he instructed Josephine in the management of the boat under sail, and she proved competent to handle her while he was asleep. Thus they were enabled to sail both day and night by taking watches in turn.

On the morning of the fourth day he was awakened by Josephine shaking him vigorously.

"A ship!" she cried excitedly.

He sat up at once. True enough, a ship was in view not three miles away from them. The sun had only just risen; had the ship passed about an hour earlier they could not have noticed her. But they were seen right enough. The ship altered course in their direction, and in about an hour they were safe on board.

The ship proved to be a Dutchman bound for Curaçoa. Her crew took the greatest pity on their condition, and they received them on board with all kindness. The master spoke but a few words of English, and they had much difficulty in making him acquainted with the main facts of their boat voyage. He, however, made them understand that he would give them a passage to Curaçoa, and that in the meantime he would do all he could for their comfort.

As Josephine and Waters walked on the upper deck in the fine weather they could hardly bring themselves to believe that their dangers and hardships were really at an end. Their thoughts went back to that hateful ship in which they had both been held in durance, and also to the man whose great sacrifice had given them their deliverance.

And then Waters thought of the roll of documents that Richards had given him at parting. Through the excitements and labors of their escape and boat voyage he had all but forgotten them. He told Josephine that he would bring the documents on deck and suggested that they should read them together. She seemed both pleased and interested, and accordingly he went below to get them.

Seated on the poop skylight with her, he cut the fastening and unrolled the papers. All but one of them were soiled with age. The top sheet, however, was clean and the writing recent. As he read the first words a mist came before his eyes, for the message they conveyed was one that almost took his senses away. His hand shook, and it was all he could do to hold the paper as he attempted once more to read it.

With difficulty he mastered his emotion. He took up the paper once more, and read:

To my Brother, David Waters. Greeting and farewell.

You will learn all from the journal of Matthew Sennett, which I give you. It is only a few hours ago that I read it, and then I knew all. Also much that I had forgotten then came back to me. I was less than four when I was taken from the care of our stepfather, whose name I had forgotten. It was he who first called me Agua Dick. Indians stole me, and my life was one of wild wandering and rough living ever after.

I encountered none but the bad until ten months ago I met Josephine Brant in the *Delaware* ship. Then it seemed to me that my manner of life was wrong, and the strivings thereof were all to no end. For me she had no regard, which is not surprising, seeing that my ways of life have not been such as she could approve. But I count that not a misfortune, since it would have been ill for her had it been otherwise. To your care, David, I entrust her, for I have observed her much since she came aboard here, and I doubt not she loves you. Therefore I entreat you that you will be to her all and more than you could be to yourself.

Of our mother I have the smallest recollection, though at times a face, kind and sorrowful, comes before me that I know must be hers. She died when I was less than three.

Touching Matthew Saint, or Sennett,

I try to recall him also, but my memory serves me ill. I was less than four when I saw him last. From his own confession he seems to have done much ill, though he says he was godfearing through all. I fear I understand him not wholly. But it was he whom our mother wedded, and there seems no doubt she was fond of him, and he of her. He has pointed out to me the way to make an end of the difficulties that beset me. That way will I now take. And so, David, farewell, and may the best of fortune attend you.

—RICHARD

Waters glanced at Josephine. She was looking away from him at the sea beyond the rail. He could not tell what was in her mind, and he feared to ask her. He doubted whether she had read the paper in his hand; he was certain she had not read the whole of it. He regarded once more the words before him, and a lump rose to his throat.

"He was my brother," he said.

"I know," she replied.

For awhile neither of them spoke. Waters folded up his brother's letter and placed it in his pocket.

"Let us see what Matthew Sennett tells us," he said after awhile.

He spread out the faded documents on his knee, and they took them up one by one.

CHAPTER XVII

THE JOURNAL OF MATTHEW SENNETT

THIS, the Narrative of my Doings [they read] is sett forth that it may profitt him, whosoever it might be, who reades it. For therein he will finde that which he should avoyde and much also that he should graspe for the benefitt of his Soulle. For no Man being perfect, Things I might have done ill pleasing to the Almighty, though I never entered Churche but I first removed my Hatte, nor suffered my Men to do likewise, nor to attend Prayers on board Shippe their Heades covered (Or woe betide 'em).

I was born in the Town of Salem in New England. My Father was a Pastor of much Learning besides being also a goode Man and Pious. In School I was well instructed in worldly Knowledge, and also in the Litanies, my Father designing I should follow his own Calling when I grew upp. But such was not my own Desire, I wishing for a Sailor's Life, but not receiving his Consent. I find from Home one Day and embarked in a small Shippe that traded with New York.

I was Sixteen or thereabouts, and passing strong for my Age. I soon learned the Seaman's Trade and became industrious and competent in all pertaining thereunto. Adventuring more as I became proficient, I joined a Snouwe that made Voyages to the Caribbean Gulf, and still farther at Times.

It was off New Providence in the Bahamas that I first met Jules Collot, a Navigator and Adventurer of French Parentage, who hailed from the Country of the Saint Lawrence. My acquaintance with him had all but proved my Undoing, for he persuaded me to sail with him. For two Yeares I was his Follower and Adherent, taking part in all his Undertakings, and practising many Times at his beheste some wicked and inhuman Actions.

Men have asked me, was Jules Collot a Christian? God alone knows. That he attended Divine Worshipp on divers Occasions I can testify, for I learned it from a goode Sacristan of Porto Bello, who afterward became my Prisoner, and tooke Service under me as an Adventurer, and was afterward hanged at New Providence. But also I more than once heard Collot, when in liquor, openly to denye his God. Doubtless to the just Vengeance of the Almighty for this Offence against His Ordainments the laste ill Fortune of the Adventurer must be assigned.

Ill Fortune came to Collot when he made his laste Descente on the Spanish Main. On one dark Night we tooke the

City of San Fernando by Surprise. Then Collot, hearing that several Companies of Soldiers were drawing nigh to the City, formed the Design of securing as Hostages the youngest Children of the Townsmen. This purpose we duly carried out, and our Commander then desired the Governor to send away the Soldiers, and tolde him that he would release his Captives only when he should depart in Safety and without Hindrance. Otherwise he purposed to slay Them. He moreover demanded a Ransome of Three Hundred Thousand Pesos Duros.

But the Pieces were not forthcoming, and on the day but one following our Capture the Soldiers made an Onsett and did us much Hurt. Thereupon Collot caused the slaying of the Infants exactly as he had Promised, and much to my Sorrow. I did try to turn him from his Design, representing to him that small Profitt would come of it and recalling the example of King Herod, who through like Causes did come to a bad Ende.

But he would have none of my Counsell, and so the Deede was done. We then hauled off and did not anchor again in the Roadstead until the Weeke following.

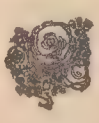
Among the Infants we tooke one of the twin Babes of Henrietta Waters, who was the Widow of an English Master Mariner; the other she contrived to hide away from us. She made much ado at parting with the Babe, shedding many Teares and giving forth Supplications no ende, to my no small Distress. I promised her I would use my goode influence with my Commander to preserve the Childe, and, shedding many Teares myself, I tooke it away with me. When the Slaughter was commanded I tooke the Childe and hid it away in the Holde, at much risk to myself, for Collot had small Patience with them that disobeyed his Commands. And so it escaped. But Mistress Waters, being little content with my Promise that the Babe should come to no Hurt, did herself seek out Collot and renew her Supplications.

The Design might have proved fatal to the Childe but that Collot, well pleased with the looks of Henrietta, who was a well favoured and comely young Woman, promised to restore to her the Babe if she would go to him in the *Buenaventura*, which was his Shippe. To Collot she went at Night time with my Contrivance, and in his Cabin, to save her Honour, she stabbed him and he died. There resulted from this Act much Danger to me and also to her. So we fled away, and taking the Babe with us, we remained hidden for a Weeke until the *Buenaventura* sailed.

Returning to San Fernando, now in Ruins, we sought out the Babe that had remained hidden, but we found it not. All the Townsmen had departed, and we could learn naught. But we met two Deserters from Collot's Shippe, and them I compelled to embark with us in a Piragua that we seized. The Spanish Main being now too hott to hold us, I shaped a Course for Hispaniola, which we reached in a Fortnight after suffering many Privations.

Mistress Waters endured the Hardshipps of the Voyage with right goode Courage. She survived and the Childe also. I tooke them to Charlestown in the Carolinas, and having bye now a goode estimate of the Goodeness and Worth of Henrietta, and a fine Regarde for her, and she also of me, we were wedded.

Happy was I thus wedded, and she also I doubt not, save that she wept many times for her other Son, he that we had failed to find in San Fernando. To ease her Melancholy I made divers Enquiries as soon as I was able, but naught resulted, save that I learned that the Childe, David by Name, was taken therefrom by a Spanish Woman of some Substance. More I could not finde out.



WE LIVED nigh to Charlestown, and I planted there, reaping a fair Rewarde for my Industrie. But after three Yeares my beloved Wife Henrietta died, to my very great Grief. Disliking

the Country Life thereafter, since my Wife was gone from me, I tooke again to the Sea, for which I had hankered not a little.

My Wife's Son was now grown to a sturdy and well formed Boy of nearly four Yeares olde, and likeable withall, though displaying at Times a willful Temper. I had called him Agua Dick, Agua being a Name often used by Mariners to denote Waters, and one I believe they have learned from the Spaniards or the Portugalls. I had to leave him in the care of a serving Woman whom, however, I trusted much.

I adventured the bulk of my Substance in a trading Shippe in which I also served as Master's Mate. The Shippe, however, was lost through no fault of the Crew, and I lost almost all I possessed. Returning to my Home after an Absence of nearly two Yeares, I found my House a Ruin, and the People thereof including the little Agua gone. They told me that marauding Indians had destroyed my property and slain both Agua and the serving Woman.

Saddened by this loss, I sought once more the Sea for a Livelihood, and this Time I sailed in a Privateer which, after a Time, turned Pirate. In this occupation I continued for many Yeares with divers Fortunes. In Time I fitted out a Shippe of my own, and thenceforth I served none but God. In the Ende great Fortune came to me, for while commanding a Shippe which I had Christened *Waspe* I fell in with a large Spanish Shippe called the *Santa Catarina*. She was well armed and gave us a mauling before we fell aboard of her. We tooke her by boarding, though the Crew offered a stoute Resistance and caused us much Losses.

Well repaid were we, however, for our Hurt and Trouble, for she proved to contain a Golden Treasure of such Bulk that we could not judge the worth of it.

Below decks she was in ill Condition and stanke evilly. Whereupon to right which I sett a Match to some kegs of Sulphur, and sending the Spaniards below also, I clapt the Hatches on 'em. At Sunrise the next day I removed the Hatches, the Interior being now thoroughly cleaned, and tooke out therefrom the Bodies of the Spaniards, they being now all deade. Then I sent all my Men into her excepting only six, which remained in the *Waspe*. They had broached a keg of Rum, and I found 'em in a fine state of Drunkenness, to my Disguste. Before going myself to the *Santa Catarina* I bored with an Auger six Holes in the Bottom of the *Waspe* (One for each of 'em). And so we left 'em and sett Sail in the Prize, which I designed to make my cruising Shippe, she being larger and better founde than the *Waspe*. The Weather getting bad after leaving the *Waspe*, we soon lost sight of her, but I doubt not she soon went to the Bottom, and the Drunkards in her.

The foull Weather lasted for more than a Day, and we had much Trouble in keeping her afloat, she taking in Water hugely at Times. We made an Island during fine Weather three Days afterwards, and I founde goode Anchorage on the lee side. One of my Mariners knew the Island, having seen it before. He called it Flying Jib. I entered the Anchorage, designing to careen Shippe.

The Island was small, and steepe in Places, with many Trees and Scrubbs; also Lianas a-plenty. I purposed to take the Treasure ashore to secure it, since the Shippe was much weakened below the Waterline, her Seames being open in Places. Therefore I commanded my Carpenter's Crew to build me a Hutte, which they did; roofing it with Palmetto Leaves. We then tooke ashore the Treasure, and I findeing a suitable Spott neare to the Hutte, my Men dug a Pitt beside a steepe Rock which resembled a Blackamoor's Heade. And there we put the Treasure (Twenty Boxes there were) and covered it upp.

Having safely buried the Gold, I gave much thought for my future Doings. Twas then I bethought me that the Life of Piracy I was leading was little

pleasing to the Almighty, and moreover there was small Need to pursue it further, since now I had Wealth untold in my Graspe. Regarding my Crew, I had much Misgiving, both for their Welfare in the Life to come, and also for their present State. They were a sad lot of Miscreants, and I feared much that this Gold might well resulte for their carnal and spiritual Undoing.

Having gotten this Notion, I resolved to fire the Powder in the Holde, and thus make an ende of the Shippe and the Men aboard of her, taking Precautions the while that I secured my own Deliverance. In this Work I saw the Act of God, who deals with all Men according to the Goode or the Ill they have done, and who accords to each a just Rewarde or Punishment in His own Time.

I therefore laid a Train to the Powder and sett a Light to it; after which I made my Escape in the Galley. The Shippe blew upp soon after I left her.

In the Hutte on the Islande I now sojourn while I make ready for the Voyage to Hispaniola which I purpose to make.

The *Santa Catarina* Golde and Silver are now come to me, for which God be thanked. I purpose to remove it in my own Time. None But I knowe the Whereabouts of itt, for the Men who aided me to hide it are now all Deade. They were Godless in the Main; and they have gotten their Desertes. Wherefore it behooves all Men to seeke the Light lest they come to Destruction.

* * *

Waters turned over the last sheet and fell to pondering over what he had just read. So this stepfather of his was none other than the notorious buccaneer, Matthew Sennett, about whom he had heard from time to time. The intelligence did not cause him very much joy. He had imagined Matthew Saint to be a very different kind of person. But the first remark that Josephine made astonished him still more.

"That was Matthew Sennett's treasure that your brother told me of, that they found on the island. It was destroyed with the ship."

For a few seconds he could do nothing but stare at her.

"Then my fortune has gone," he said at last. "It was that which took me a-voyaging to America." After a pause he added, "I can hardly regret it. It was evil gold and evilly come by. Much blood it has cost. I can have but small regrets at losing it.

"It's mighty strange," he said, "how events have shaped themselves with us in likeness to those of which we have read in these documents. My stepfather blew up his ship, and so did Richards his, though, as he tells me in his letter, he gained the idea from Matthew Sennett. And then my mother voyaging in a boat with my stepfather as we two have done together, and . . ."

* * *

In his new house overlooking the placid waters of Pamlico Sound, David Waters sat one evening with Lewis Garner, attorney-at-law. Dinner had just been concluded, and they had stayed behind to finish a bottle of wine. The lawyer handed across the table to Waters the documents of Matthew Sennett which he had given him to read.

"Most remarkable," said the lawyer. "And to think that old Matt Saint was such a villain! We thought we knew him through and through. Folks used to point him out to their children as one they should try to imitate."

"He prospered much in Charleston it seems," said Waters. "He had small need for the wealth he got from his piracies."

"True," agreed the lawyer.

"I thought I had lost all my inheritance when I learned that what was to have come to me was Sennett's Haul."

"Yet your greater fortune was lost on that island they call the Flying Jib."

Waters stood up, smiling at his pretty wife, Josephine.

"Nay," he said. "On the Flying Jib there came to me my greatest fortune."

The CAMP-FIRE

A free-to-all meeting place for readers, writers and adventurers

AN INTERESTING note on whales from Albert Richard Wetjen, whose stories of the sea all of you know well:

Portland, Oregon

May I venture a few remarks modifying Mr. Victor Shaw's article on whales in the Ask Adventure section of the March 1st number? Mr. Shaw states that their (Greenland whales) sense of sight is acute. I believe he is in error here. Some years ago, when writing a series of whale stories, I made quite a dive into the literature of the subject, and it is my recollection that it is generally stated that whales have little or no sense of smell and a very feeble sense of sight. The "Britannica" says:

"It seems, therefore, perfectly evident that whales must hear when in the water. This inference is confirmed by the comparatively small development of the other sense organs. The eye, for instance, is very small and can be of little use even at the comparatively small depths to which whales are now believed to descend . . . Consequently, it would seem that when below the surface of the water they must depend chiefly upon the sense of hearing."

I disagree with the "Britannica" as to the depths whales descend. The line carried in a whaleboat (old style) was about 300 fathoms long, and there are many cases on record of whales sounding to such depths, when harpooned, that two and even three tubs of line have been carried out; and sometimes the whale got away at that. Of course a great deal of the line would be taken up by the forward slant, but even so, with nine hundred fathoms of line the harpooned animal must be down at least two hundred fathoms and probably more. The sulphur-bottom whale, about which very little is known, is said to sound to such depths that there have been extremely few specimens ever caught. Louis Becke in fact ("Notes From My South Sea Log") states that no specimens have been caught.

THE sperm whale has a habit of sitting on its tail and slowly revolving, its head about twenty feet out of the water. It has been believed that this was done to enable the animal to survey the surrounding sea and horizon, but if the eyes are almost useless, as many authorities state, might it not be done so the whale could *hear* what was going on about him; much as a forest creature will point around the compass to *smell?*

I do not believe, although I am no authority on the matter, that any sea animal has a very keen sight. I have seen sharks make two or three rushes at a small bait before finally locating it. Whales when attacking boats often missed them. The charge of a swordfish seems a very blind matter to me. In short, I think they all have acute hearing, and when aroused, either by hunger or anger, simply make for the centre of the disturbance. When escaping, they simply get away from the centre. This is demonstrated ("Britannica") "by the practice of shouting on the part of the fishermen when engaged in driving a shoal of porpoises or black-fish into shallow water, for the purpose of frightening their intended victims."

AS REGARDS the languishing of commercial whaling, I think that situation has changed. For decades now the Norwegians have kept many vessels and whaling stations in the Antarctic. If you remember when Admiral Byrd was believed in trouble down there, the Norwegian whaling vessels in the vicinity were asked to stand by him. And two or three years ago a $10,000,000 syndicate was formed in Australia for the purpose of taking over the Norwegian interests. This syndicate not only intended to build several new shore stations but also to revive pelagic, or deep-sea, whaling, and were going to build special steamers with large doors in the bow through which captured whales could be drawn, and in a massive tank be flensed at leisure.

We have recently had a curious experience here (Portland, Oregon) with a whale. The city is about one hundred miles from the sea, up the Columbia River. The citizens awoke one morning to discover a whale disporting itself under the town bridges; the first time such an animal has been known to ascend a fresh water river to such a distance, though whales have been seen in the Thames near Gravesend. After some time this whale was harpooned and killed by two "sportsmen" who wanted it for show purposes, and it was discovered to be a female killer whale (Orca gladiator) some sixteen feet long.

THE orca is one of the most interesting of the whales, being the only one to possess really effective and massive ivory teeth in both jaws, such teeth being highly prized by many South Sea tribes. The orca commits fearful destruction among the seal herds and among the salmon schools; is indeed noted as the most ferocious of the whales, attacking the giant members of its own species and tearing out the tongue, which it devours. Yet strangely enough it has never been known to attack man, not even when the crews of whale boats have been flung in the water and are helpless.

The orca has, I believe, the keenest sight of any whale, yet this one caught at Portland seemed to rely principally upon its hearing, for when harpooned and landed it was found the eyes were almost completely grown over with weed, though the animal had swum and dived in and out between the piers of bridges without striking one, apparently unable, however, to find its way back to the sea. There are, I might add, several whaling stations operating successfully upon the Pacific coast, and you hardly need to be told where. You can smell them ten miles away.

—ALBERT RICHARD WETJEN

A COUPLE of points in connection with T. R. Ellis's recent story (Feb. 15th) of automobile racing in our pages:

New York City

Please refer to "Barrel 'em and Bend 'em" in Feb. 15th *Adventure* and the A.A.A. Contest Board Competition Rules 1931.

1. A *blue* not *green* flag signals last lap (Rule 263).

2. Assumed names are prohibited and may cause disqualification (Rule 103 and 214).

—E. R. MORTON

Mr. Ellis's reply:

Columbus, Ohio

I think, somewhere in the story the time was set "several years back". The change in A.A.A. Contest Board rules was made in 1930. Prior to that the flag signals were:

Red—Course is clear.

Yellow—Course is fouled. Slow down and hold your position.

White—Stop at pit for consultation. (In short dirt-track sprint races this virtually amounted to disqualification.)

White with black center—Give way to left to allow competitor to pass. (Sometimes used if a car was riding dangerously high on the bowl.)

Green—You are entering your last lap.

Checker—You have finished.

As to *Moreau's* driving under an assumed name: You will probably recall that no one at the track, with the exception of De Gama, knew who he was. He had never before driven in this country and, naturally, the A.A.A. Contest Board would have no reason for checking up on

him. I know of several cases where the rule you mention is not arbitrarily enforced. If a contestant wished to drive under an assumed name for reasons that were personal, and had not participated in "outlaw" contests or disobeyed other important Contest Board rules, I think I am reasonably sure in saying that no fair minded A.A.A. representative (and I have never met any other kind) would object. —T. R. ELLIS

A LADY member of the 'Fire chats briefly about Jivaro mummified heads and the interbreeding of dogs and wolves:

Los Angeles, California

We have one of the shrunken heads of the Jivaro Indians here in the Los Angeles Museum and I thought you might like the enclosed picture. I studied the original for some time. The head is shrunken to the size of an orange. All bone has been removed. Eyelids are stitched down and lips are stitched together. This is to prevent the victim from seeing or talking to the spirits. Observe, though, the length of the hair, out of all proportion to the size of the head. Apparently the length and texture of the hair is not affected by the shrinking process.

In re letter in Camp-fire, March 15th issue, concerning interbreeding of dogs and wolves: About ten years ago a man I know who is keeper of a zoo bred three fine female wolves. One mated with a police dog, one with an Alaskan husky and one to an ordinary hound. I wish Camp-fire fans could have seen the offspring thereof. Of all the miserable, slinking, worthless looking wretches that ever came into this world, they were by far the worst. They resembled neither dog nor wolf, nor in any way suggested either origin. It was very evident they had no place at all in the animal kingdom and so were chloroformed.

—DOLORES LEIDEN

AND a note from Hugh Pendexter of our Writers' Brigade, on the wolf-husky question:

Norway, Maine

In re interbreeding of wolves and dogs in issue of March 15th, Alexander Henry, veteran fur-trader for North West Company, 1799-1814, in his diary, January 6th, 1801, Vo. I, p. 166, Coues Edition, in part states: "The female wolves prefer our dogs to their own species, and daily come near the fort to entice the dogs. They often succeed."

On the same page he tells of the male dogs joining wolf packs to find the female wolves.

—HUGH PENDEXTER

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL note from Henry Vincent, who wrote "Sennett's Haul", in this issue, has not yet been received, to go with his first story in our pages. But from his book publishers comes this bit revealing some of his history:

In London, England, near King's Cross, is a small district well known to readers of Dickens, full of the rollicking atmosphere of a London rapidly disappearing. Here Henry Vincent was born and reared, in days when all boys reveled in Henty and Marryat, Clark Russell and Manville Fenn. To this tinge of the romantic tradition he later added the richer coloring of reality; for he has traveled widely in Europe—Rome, Naples, Venice, the Rhineland and the Black Forest, the medieval cities of Belgium, summers in Switzerland, voyages to Lisbon and the Canaries

During the Great War he volunteered for service in the British Navy as a stoker, and sailed in various cruisers in many waters, from the coasts of Norway and Jutland to the steaming rivers of West Africa, from the Cape of Good Hope to the Firth of Forth, experiences recorded by him in his books, "A Stoker's Log" and "Hostilities Only".

MORE about Brian Boru, King of Ireland:

Shoshoni, Wyoming

In your last issue I see that Mr. Donald O'Sullivan queries why I brought in the name of Brian Boru in my letter on the Varangian Guard. The answer to this question is easy. If he had read the article carefully and was informed regarding the state of affairs in the British Isles at that period, 970 to 1020, he would have seen my reasons. Up to the time of the Battle of Tara in 980, which was the first real defeat of the Vikings in Ireland, Ireland had been one of the favorite plundering grounds of the Vikings, both from Norway and from Denmark. From 795 to this date they had marauded, harried and partly settled the east coast, and had a small kingdom established around Limerick on the west coast, or rather on the estuary of the Shannon River. Malachy or Maelsechlainn, the rival of Brian Boru, Boirumhe, Boruma, Boroimhe, or Boroma (I have been careful to give all these varied spellings to satisfy Mr. O'Sullivan), was the victor in this battle. The Dublin Danes under Olaf Quaran, that most romantic figure of Viking literature, was so totally defeated that Olaf retired from active life and went into a monastery, doing penance for his wicked and good deeds the balance of his life.

Brian had been doing active work before and after this time and had cleaned out the bulk of the rest of the Norsemen that Malachy had left.

On the field of Glen Mama in 1000 the Vikings again sustained another terrible defeat at his hands, and from then on until his death on the battlefield of Clontarf the Norse Vikings gave Ireland a wide berth and turned their attention to the east, where under Canute and Swend they were getting easier pickings in England. These defeats by Brian had considerable influence on the men who went East and joined the Varangian Guard, for it is just at this time that we get definite information from the Icelandic sagas of individuals who were members of the Constantinople outfit.

TAKE all these facts into consideration: Brian's defeats of them in Ireland; their flocking in great numbers to England to help out Canute and Swend; and the rising influence of Christianity; and you can see why from then on Viking expeditions began to lose the high standing that they had in the past. Adventurous young men turned their attention to the East and went to Constantinople and hired as top fighters. Those that did not get so far went to courts of the Russian kings. I hope now that you have accepted my explanation for bringing Brian into the article.

But now that I have explained myself, I will turn around and give you some facts concerning Brian, and I won't go into Celtic mythology and bring forgotten Celtic gods into the matter, either.

According to Mr. O'Sullivan's statement, Brian was born in 926. This on the authority of O'Halloran. According to the old annals of Ulster, which are considered the most reliable authority for dates in early Irish history, he was born in 941. On the death of his brother Mahoun by assassination, he was not King of Munster but of Thomond, a district of Munster. This brother was never *Ardrigh,* and Brian, only after long, hard fighting; he did not attain to that distinction until 1002. The ancient book called the "Wars of the Gaedhil with the Gaill" states the killing of Ivar, the Danish king of Limerick, in two ways: one, that Brian killed him and his two sons, and then, secondly, states that the O'Donnels of Clare did the killing. This occurred in 977. The author of the book was a contemporary and great partisan of Brian, and either took personal part in the Battle of Clontarf or else had the testimony of eyewitnesses, as his statements concerning high tide on the day of the battle has been checked by modern calculations.

Without any question, Brian was one of the greatest Irishmen that ever lived. From the kingship of a comparative small district in Munster, by sheer hard fighting and force of ability he rose to be the over king of all Ireland, and made every king and kinglet—native, Dane and Norseman—pay him tribute. The Battle of Clontarf, though a glorious victory, was one of the crowning misfortunes of Ireland, as Brian was killed there before he had time to finish his work. The Norse or Icelandic sagas call him Brian the Good.

DID Brian have any Scandinavian blood or not? Some historians have advanced the claim that he had. From 860 onwards there had been a great amount of intermarriage between the rulers of the different Danish and Norse kingdoms and their Irish neighbors so that in all probability he had. Olaf Quaran, the King of Dublin, was married to Brian's divorced wife, Gormflaith. She was a sister of the King of Leinster, and at the time of the Battle of Clontarf her son, Sigtrigg of the Silken Beard, was married to a daughter of Brian. In fact, one story relates that both stood on the walls of Dublin watching the battle, and when it went against the Danes and Leinster men, she made a sarcastic remark to her husband about the bravery of his men. In answer he knocked one of her teeth down her throat. This was common marital courtesy in those days.

THE Battle of Clontarf shows a wonderful blend of racial elements on both sides: the Danes of Dublin, Wexford, Waterford and Norse Vikings from the Hebrides and the Earl of Orkney. Scotchmen from their west coast were aided by the Leinster Irishmen against Brian. Brodir, the Viking who slew Brian, had a brother Ospak, who was helping Brian. The Limerick Danes were aiding Brian. Sigurd, Earl of the Orkneys, had an Irish princess for his mother. Gormflaith had promised her hand to both Brodir and Earl Sigurd provided Brian was killed. The lady evidently had no love left for the old man. The question was settled for her, as all of them were killed in the fight. After Brodir had killed Brian, the Icelandic sagas claim, Brodir had his belly opened with a battle-ax; his entrails taken out. One end was tied to a tree and he was turned around the tree until all his entrails were wrapped around it.

An amusing story is told of an Icelandic farmer's son who took part in the battle as one of Earl Sigurd's bodyguard. Thorstein Hallson was his name. Earl Sigurd had a magical banner with a raven embroidered in it. It was supposed to give victory to the side which had it, but death to the bearer. About a half-dozen standard bearers had already been slain when the Earl called to Thorstein to carry it. Thorstein answered, "Carry your own devil yourself!" So the Earl took it off the staff and wrapped it around his waist and soon afterwards he was slain by a spear thrust. Thorstein went on fighting, and when the tide of battle turned, he ran off with the rest; his shoestring broke in two and he stopped to tie it. As he was stopping, Brian's son came up to him and asked him why he kept running away from them. Thorstein coolly answered him that his home was in Iceland and he could not get there that night. The answer so amused the Irishman that he gave him peace there and then. Thorstein lived afterwards to tell the history of the battle to his grandchildren, and this is the way we got the Icelandic side of the story of the battle.

—EDWARD L. CRABB

Ask Adventure

For free information and services you can't get elsewhere

Condor

A TOUGH bird to catch.

Request:—"1. In which South American country are condors most plentiful? What route should I take to find them?

2. What method should I employ in the capture of condors?"

—HIRAM J. YODER, Taft, Texas

Reply, by Mr. Edgar Young:—1. The condor is frequent but not abundant in all the countries listed under my name in Ask Adventure. The country where they are fairly plentiful and which is most accessible to you would possibly be Ecuador. You go by steamer to Guayaquil and thence up inland by rail on the G&Q Railroad to some of the highland towns or cities and then make trips from there into the mountains. Like the Southern buzzard, the condor makes his nest and home in the roughest out-of-the-way places he can find. Due to his size and great strength he is a much more dangerous customer than the vulture or buzzard of the U. S. He is the only winged thing that can fly over the Andes or in the highest of the highlands where the air is very light.

2. The taking of full grown condors would be work fraught with grave danger, as they are not only of immense size and strength but are inclined to be highly pugnacious when their nests or roosts are approached by climbers who, handicapped by having to cling by hand and foot to keep from falling, are hard put to defend themselves from the swooping attacks of the incensed birds. Some sort of strong nets would have to be devised and carried along upward to some projecting cliff where the enraged fowls should begin their attack, and thence onward to the nests where young fowls and eggs could be procured. A full grown condor is as large as he is reported to be and for all his size is as quick in the air as a hawk—and a very shrewd fighter. Some manner of hiding in pits and luring them down into the plain by baits of carrion might be thought out.

Homestead

CLEARING a farm in the Tanana Valley of Alaska.

Request:—"I am interested in the Tanana Valley, Alaska.

1. How is the climate for farming? Are the Winters too severe for livestock?

2. What are the chances for clearing a farm? (I have heard that the land is all timber land and would require a great amount of clearing.)

3. How much money would be required for 3 tenderfeet to build a farm up until it would pay? (We have a car.) Would it be possible to homestead with practically no money?

4. Can money be made in Winter at trapping?

5. I have heard that the Summers are warm and the land becomes swampy and gnats, flies, and mosquitos become very bad. Also that smallpox is prevalent. Would you please verify or correct these statements?"

—HARRY J. KRAMER, JR, West Reading, Pennsylvania

Reply, by Mr. Theodore S. Solomons:—1. The climate of the Tanana Valley is severe in Winter, as to temperature alone. Storms are *not* frequent. The Summers are middling warm with occasionally a quite warm spell. The region is well adapted to agriculture, as the Government experiment stations have convincingly demonstrated.

2. Your chances of making a farm are good. All you have to do is clear some land of the timber, which isn't very thick and is not at all large, and get the moss off. The land is fertile and all hardy north temperate zone crops can be grown, especially wheat and rye and potatoes, as also all ordinary vegetables and berries.

3. You can homestead with practically no money. That is, for the Government fees. You would have to make a living mining or working, and cultivate your land between times. It is being done there now, and has been for fifteen years or more.

4. Yes, you can make some money trapping, but of course you'd want to be quite a space off from the railroad and settlements. A motor road is proposed between the Tanana and the Yukon, and that ought to open up some good land—rolling and without heavy timber to buck. In fact, there are spots to be picked up where clearing is a cinch. I mean very little to be done.

5. Flies aren't bad, but gnats and mosquitos are bad in Alaska in Summer nearly everywhere. Swampy land would not be taken for farming. There is plenty of well drained land; in fact ten times as much as swamp land. Alaska is a healthy country. There was a little smallpox among the natives, but with vaccination it disappeared.

For general information, address the Depts. of Agriculture and Interior, Washington, D. C. They will send you pamphlets with all the particulars.

Borneo

SAMPANNING up the Barito River.

Request:—"I wrote you some time ago concerning my plans for a trip to the interior of Borneo via the Barito river. Your answers were a great help, and I take this opportunity to thank you for your kind assistance. However, there are a few more points on which I would like to have your advice:

1. Would it be advisable to substitute North American canoes in lieu of the native praus? There are so many points in their favor, such as ease of portage and handling in general, that I am rather of the opinion that they are the superior craft. However, your opinion will guide me in this matter.

2. Will you please give a description of the average prau, including capacity, weight and size?

3. Would solaro cloth be the proper material for our clothing? If not, what would you suggest?

4. In what style should we have our clothing tailored?

5. What kind of footgear would you suggest?

6. Where and how do we get our permits to import firearms into Borneo?

7. Will we have to obtain permission to make the trip? If so, how and where do we get it?"

—JOHN DOYLE HARRIS, Randolph Field, Texas

Reply, by Capt. R. W. van Raven de Sturler:—1, 2. Not in my opinion. Remember that the Barito is navigable almost to its very source—therefore there are no serious rapids or portages to overcome; therefore neither the size, weight nor capacity of the vessel is of any importance. If you use individual canoes, they will need considerable attention in the sometimes fairly swift water; also you will have to propel them yourself which, in the tropics, is not a pleasant job, prevents you to a great extent from using your guns en route, does not "click" with the natives' idea of a white man's dignity and is always apt to capsize, spilling your load, guns, ammunition, cameras, food, etc, into the water, which generally does not improve the load's condition, even if you do recover them sometimes. Neither are you protected from the direct sunrays which, combined with the high humidity, will make your days most uncomfortable and your nights unbearable because I have yet to see the canoe in which one can safely and comfortably sleep.

GENERALLY speaking, it is always best to use whatever means of transportation the natives have developed; they, having had the advantage of a thorough knowledge of conditions and requirements, are naturally more apt to design a practical boat or sampan than any outsider without any experience in the country in question.

A sampan can be had of almost any size within reason, is partly covered or can be made so, provides shade, comparative coolness and some privacy, protection from night dews and, last but not least, reasonable sleeping space. Its size can only be determined on the spot by the quantity of equipment you wish to carry with you and the number of members of the expedition. The natives propel the sampan or prau; the whites can take it easy, shoot, sleep or do anything they please; also the natives know the camping sites, native villages for the purchase of food en route, etc, and can be used as interpreters, if picked for that purpose, which is one of the essentials, unless one of you speaks Dutch or Malay.

While I do not know the weight or tonnage of these sampans, I can tell you that you can find any size you may require and, there being no portages, weight or size are not of importance.

3, 4. All you need to take from here are your summer clothes plus a few suits of heavy underwear, should you enter upon high altitudes, in which case your winter overcoat will also come in handy. BUY NOTHING HERE! Wait until you arrive in Singapore, Batavia or Bandjarmasin, the port of Borneo you will start from, call on the resident, the highest Dutch official (get the Secretary of the Holland American Chamber of Commerce, 381 Bush Street, San Francisco, Cal., to give you a sort of letter of introduction to this resident in Bandjarmasin) and request him to assist or refer you to some reliable white man who will see to it that you get the RIGHT equipment, pay the RIGHT price for it and save your time doing it. In return, unless you have agreed to pay him for his services, (this depends on his station in life) and you care to associate with him, ask him to dinner at your hotel and lead the conversation toward your plans; the chances

are that you will learn more from him than I could tell you in a whole book and be guided and advised as to many details in the bargain.

5. Purchase, if you wish, a pair of sponge soled low shoes here in the States; I have worn these through the Sudan, Central Africa and even on the borders of the Sahara and would never be without them; all the other footgear buy in Bandjarmasin.

6. The above mentioned Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, if properly approached, will prepare almost everything for you besides introducing you to the resident—he may refer you direct to some business man or house where you can do business without bothering the resident. Once in Borneo, do not try to bribe any official for any service to be rendered; they are very sensitive and there is always a way to express your appreciation or desires without offending the other fellow, but then, you know yourselves what to do in such cases and do not need my advice. A dinner or Rystafel party, a bottle of wine or a drink at the right time will do much more than mere money and permits more intimacy.

7. You must have a landing permit costing Fl. 25 or $10.00 per person. This you will obtain aboard ship, in Singapore or Batavia or Bandjarmasin, according to the way you travel. This amount will be refunded to you provided you leave the country within six months from the date of arrival. You also must pass a medical examination aboard or ashore before being allowed to land. Both these permits can only be obtained at your port of disembarkation in the Dutch East Indies or at the Royal Netherlands Immigration Office in Singapore, if you so prefer.

Trigger

FOUR pounds is about the right pull for a handgun.

Request:—"I shot an Army Colt .45 the other day with about a 4 lb. trigger pull. I liked it better than the light pull of my Ace. Could I adjust my Ace like that? Would you advise target practise with a heavy pull?"

—J. V. TWELKER, San Diego, California

Reply, by Mr. Donegan Wiggins:—I personally try to have at least a four-pound pull on my handguns; while I do not shoot the revolver at the Standard target, save a few scattering (yes, that's the correct term) shots when I go up to Portland, and drop around to the police station and smoke up the range in the basement a few times. But I find I do better general shooting with a pull of that weight than with a very light one; furthermore, it's not so dangerous when some one else picks my revolver up to shoot a string at some object.

I feel sure that a competent gunsmith could increase the weight of pull on your Ace Colt, which is incidentally one dandy little gun.

Lone Star Redmen

THE Indian population of Texas has dwindled to 2100.

Request:—"In what county of Texas is there now an Indian Reservation?"

—C. HATCHITT, Acme, Texas

Reply, by Mr. J. W. Whiteaker:—There were originally about 16 different tribes of Indians in Texas. In later days some were placed on reservations in Oklahoma, others drifted into Old Mexico and also into New Mexico, until at the present time there are about 2100 Indians left in Texas.

The Alabama and Casshattis tribes are on a reservation in Polk County between Livingston and Woodville. There are about 250 in the tribes on a 4280 acre tract of land. Still hold on to their old customs in the big thicket. There is a small number of Seminoles in Kinney County near Brackettville, where they were on a reservation, but at this time they have left it and are mingling with the farmers. In the Rio Grande Valley near El Paso there are some Ysleta Indians. The counties that have the most Indians in them are: Ft. Bend 467; El Paso 271; Polk 248; Harris 245; and Montgomery 204.

Photography

HINTS on the marketing of pictures.

Request:—"I have a few photographs that I am going to try to sell, and I'd like to get some information on how to go about it. Here's what I want to know:

1. Does a picture have to be a certain size (say 3¼ x 4¼) to sell?

2. Should I write my name, address, and title of picture on the back, or put them on a separate paper?

3. If I sell a picture to a magazine do I lose the right to sell the same one to another magazine?

4. If I can sell the same picture to more than one, ought I to let each publisher know to whom it had been sold previously?

5. Suppose I enter a picture in a contest (such as those conducted by some Sunday magazines) and it wins a prize; would I lose all rights to the picture (if nothing was said in the contest rules to that effect)?

6. If it's possible to sell the same picture several times, would you send several out at the same time to different publishers, or send to only one at a time, and wait for results before sending to another?

7. Four years ago I was in Idaho, and took some pictures of a freak rock formation. Everybody who saw them thought they were good, and I gave them away kind of indiscriminately. After I came back home I saw one of them in a maga-

zine. Now, I'd like to know how to find out whether I lost the rights to that picture, or not."
—CLARENCE M. EARNEST, W. Finley, Pennsylvania

Reply, by Mr. Paul L. Anderson:—1. A photograph less than 5 x 7 is under a severe handicap when it comes to selling to a publisher, and 8 x 10 is better. I won't say that you absolutely *couldn't* sell a 3¼ x 4¼, but the chances are against it. An 8 x 10 glossy print has the best chance.

2. On the back of the print.

3. If you have copyrighted the print, and sell to the first publisher with the understanding that you may sell to another in a different line, you may sell to more than one. For example, if you have a picture of a child running a tractor, you might sell it to a Sunday supplement as a human interest picture, and to a farm magazine as a demonstration of how easy it is to run a tractor. But if you sell it to two Sunday supplements, or two farm magazines, you'll be in wrong with both.

4. You bet you ought!

5. It depends. If you haven't copyrighted the picture, it would be covered by the magazine's copyright, and you would lose all rights to it. On the other hand, if you have copyrighted it, the rights would remain yours.

6. Send one at a time.

7. You sure lost all rights to that picture. Of course, you could take another of the same subject, copyright that, and be covered. It would be well, though, to have the second slightly different from the first, to avoid argument.

Soldier Pay

GENERALLY speaking, the U. S. Army is the best paid in the world —but in some grades and ranks there are exceptions.

Request:—"Is there any other country in the world that pays its soldiers more money than the U. S. A? If so, will you please let me know what nation it is?"
—THEODORE J. PEABODY, Poughkeepsie, New York

Reply, by Capt. Glen R. Townsend:—It is not possible to give a categorical answer to your question as to which nation pays its soldiers the most money. The basis of pay differs in the various countries. If all pay, allowances and perquisites are considered, as well as all grades and ranks, I think it would be a safe assertion that the United States army is the best paid army in the world. Even this statement might be challenged, however, on the basis of the difference in the standards and cost of living.

So far as actual pay is concerned some soldiers in other countries receive more than those of the United States. In Canada, for example, a recruit over 18 years of age receives pay at the rate of $1.20 per day immediately upon enlistment. In the United States army the rate under similar conditions is only 70 cents. In the case of a sergeant in the Canadian permanent force the pay averages $2.00 per day. In the United States army a sergeant receives $54.00 per month upon appointment, but a sergeant with 20 years' service receives slightly more pay than the highest rate available to a sergeant in the Canadian permanent force.

IN THE case of officers the regimental pay of the Canadian permanent force is somewhat lower than the base rate of pay for officers of our army. However, when the extra allowances and extra pay for various kinds of duty are considered, the average will be equal to or slightly above the pay of officers of the United States army.

Australia and New Zealand also have small but well paid armies and the rate of pay for officers in some of the South American countries equals or exceeds that of the United States. In Europe the higher ranking officers are, in general, better paid than the higher ranking officers of the United States army, whereas in the United States the junior officers are better paid. Most of the armies of Europe being conscript armies, the rate of pay for enlisted men is low, but the noncommissioned officers are reasonably well paid if the difference in the standards and cost of living is considered.

Tour

CHOICE of transcontinental routes depends on the weather.

Request:—"Please give me best route to California, and best time of year to start."
—ELMER STRAW, New York City

Reply, by Major Charles G. Percival:—If your trip West is made prior to middle of May, or during any of the Winter months, then figure on using one of the Southern routes. A popular winter route is reached from the Middle West by going south along the Mississippi River via US No. 61 or No. 51 to Memphis, and thence west to Little Rock, Ark., Texarkana and Dallas, Tex.; continuing west from Dallas on US No. 80 to El Paso, Tucson, Phoenix, Yuma, and from El Centro to San Diego, Cal. In going north from San Diego take US No. 101 or US No. 99 to Frisco.

Another good Southern route is US No. 90 from Florida or New Orleans west to Shreveport, joining US No. 80 at Dallas. Still another is available by using US No. 40 from Kansas City west to Colorado Springs and south via Trinidad, Col. to Santa Fé, joining US No. 66 and continuing west through Gallup to Holbrook, Needles and Williams to Barstow, San Bernardino and

Los Angeles and north to Frisco, Portland, Seattle and B. C. points. If you take this route you can make a side trip to the Grand Canyon by detouring at Williams, Arizona.

If traveling any time after the last of May you can figure quite safely on most any of the Northern or Central routes to California. The routes I refer to are US No. 10 from Minneapolis, also US No. 12. These go west through the Dakotas and Montana with stopovers at Yellowstone National Park, which opens June 20th; from there via the mountainous country to Butte, Missoula, etc.; into Spokane, Seattle and south from those cities to Frisco and Los Angeles and San Diego; also the Custer Battlefield Highway (US No. 16) running west from Dubuque, Ia. to Sioux Falls, Black Hills to Yellowstone National Park; US No. 30 from Chicago west to Omaha, Cheyenne, Salt Lake; from here use US No. 40 to Reno, Sacramento and Frisco; or Victory Highway (US No. 40-S) from Kansas City to Denver, Salt Lake City and Reno to Frisco. I do not specify any of these routes as they are all good, have wonderful scenic and historical aspects. Your route from the East is entirely optional with you according to your residence. There are many good roads from New York.

You can secure wonderful maps and up-to-date road information free from the Socony Touring Service, 26 Broadway, New York City, also an excellent transcontinental map, detailing all these routes from the Automobile Club of America, 11 E. 53d St, N. Y. City for $1.00. It is advisable to write The Socony Touring Service a week before you start for definite road conditions and best possible routes, owing to storms and climatic conditions. They keep up a daily mail, telephonic and telegraphic service of all road conditions all over the U. S. Their maps are free.

Canada

HOMESTEADERS must keep off the dole in British Columbia.

Request:—"Would you kindly give us some information concerning the Peace River lands, both in B. C. and Alberta or even farther north? Would it be possible to make a living for a small family? We like outdoor life. Do not mind how far we are from places. Would prefer hunting and fishing. Limited means."

—V. M. HOSKIN, Balfour, British Columbia

Reply, by Mr. C. Plowden:—It is not of the least use going into Peace River now. Most of the people there are at present upon Govt. relief. B. C. is nearly as bad. You can get land here, 160 acres, giving you plenty of chance for hunting, free, by doing a reasonable amount of improvement. A game license to shoot off your place would cost you $2.50. You can not get a trapping license unless you are a British subject. You can get maps by writing Bureau of Information, Victoria, B. C; also hunting conditions. Tell them exactly what you want. At this time you would have to satisfy the Govt. that you have sufficient means not to become a charge upon them.

Our Experts—They have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but with an eye to their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

They will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their sections, subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assume any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible.

1. **Service**—It is free to anybody, provided self-addressed envelope and *full* postage, *not attached*, are enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union. Be sure that the issuing office stamps the coupon in the left-hand circle.

2. **Where to Send**—Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. **DO NOT** send questions to this magazine.

3. **Extent of Service**—No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.

4. **Be Definite**—Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.

A complete list of the "Ask Adventure" experts appears in the issue of the fifteenth of each month

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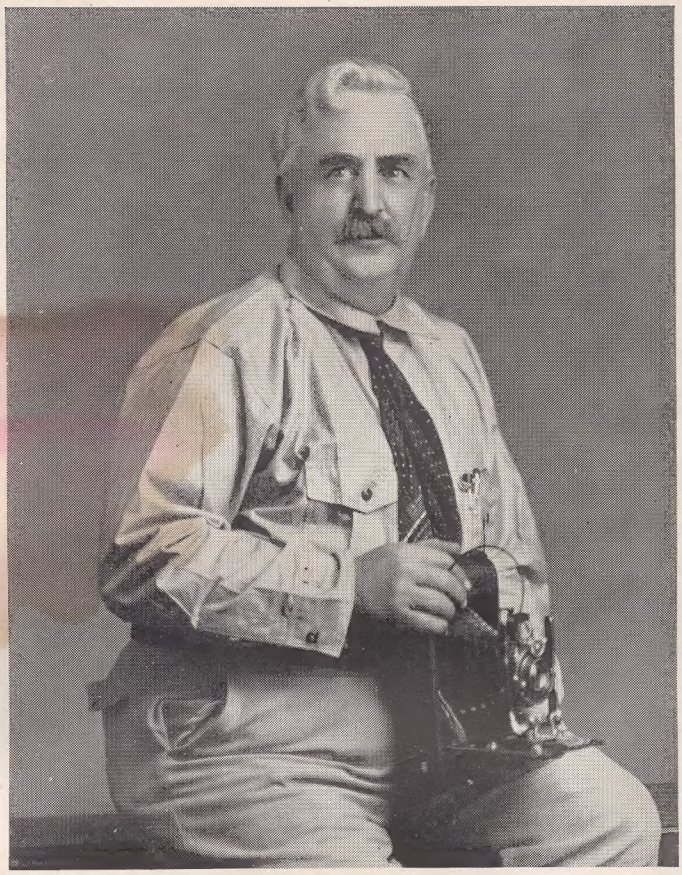
THE CALL of THE WILD



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